THE LONG MIDDLE PASSAGE:

THE ENSLAVEMENT OF AFRICANS AND THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE, 1640-1808

by

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Abstract

This dissertation studies the enslavement of Africans through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. It focuses principally on the trans-Atlantic slave trade organized by Britons, a trade that involved 3.2 million enslaved people. Drawing principally on the records of slave trading merchants, this dissertation reconstructs the individual stages of an enslaved African's tortuous journey into slavery, a multi-year "Long Middle Passage" that dwarfed the ten-week ocean voyage that has been the focus of so much scholarly attention to date. I break the Long Middle Passage into five distinct stages to each of which I devote a chapter: initial enslavement; sale on the African coast; the Middle Passage; sale in the Americas; and the "seasoning." An African's age, gender, and especially their health, shaped the direction that they took through the Long Middle Passage, because slave traders constantly sorted and sold people according to their physical attributes. The age and gender of enslaved Africans embarking on slave ships was shaped by the internal African slave trade, which resulted in varying proportions of men, women, and children moving to particular regions of the coast. European ship captains carefully selected enslaved people according to stringent criteria, and so Africans entering Atlantic slavery were typically young and healthy. The crowded and unsanitary conditions on slave ships, explored in the third chapter of this thesis, debilitated large numbers of people. As a result, as many as a fifth of the enslaved people arriving in the Americas were sickly depending on where in Africa enslaved people had been carried from. American slave traders sold arriving Africans by sorting them according to their age and health and then vending them to colonial buyers of varying economic stature. Adults and children, and the sickly and the healthy, subsequently took divergent paths into American slavery and ultimately faced very different seasoning regimes. This dissertation argues, therefore, that the individual processes that comprised the Long Middle Passage powerfully shaped the forced migration of enslaved Africans in the Americas.

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Introduction

Between 1640 and 1808, 3.2 million Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas aboard British slave ships, each of whom underwent a multi-year process of enslavement. This dissertation studies that process—a traumatic and violent journey that powerfully shaped the ultimate and divergent fates of enslaved people in the Atlantic World—which I label the Long Middle Passage. I reconstruct the Long Middle Passage by looking closely at the methods employed by slave traders in a variety of locations in Africa and the Americas. This dissertation therefore employs a comparative approach that is not rooted in a single location. By focusing on broad practices in the slave trade this dissertation departs from existing studies of the enslavement process, which have typically followed individuals,[1] specific slave ships,[2] or groups of people taken from particular parts of the African coast and then transported to a single American colony.[3] Using these approaches, historians have shed light on the trans-Atlantic slave

[1] For biographical approaches, see for example, J. S. Handler, "Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in British America," *Slavery & Abolition* 23, no. 1 (April 1, 2002), pp.25–56; Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*, Reprint edition (New York: Penguin Books, 2007); Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Randy J. Sparks, *Africans in the Old South: Mapping Exceptional Lives across the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[2] For voyage based approaches, see for example, Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade: Comprising the Log of the Daniel and Henry of 1700 and Accounts of the Slave Trade from the Minor Ports of England 1698-1725* (London: Pimlico, 1998); Bruce L. Mouser, ed., *A Slaving Voyage to Africa and Jamaica: The Log of the Sandown, 1793-1794* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2002); Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds Of The Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Sylviane A. Diouf, *Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Tom Henderson Wells, *The Slave Ship Wanderer* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2009); James Walvin, *The Zong: A Massacre, the Law and the End of Slavery* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); Sean M. Kelley, *The Voyage of the Slave Ship Hare: A Journey into Captivity from Sierra Leone to South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

[3] For studies that follow groups of enslaved people through the trade, see for example, Douglas B. Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier: Igbo Africans in Virginia* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 2005); Lorena Seebach Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1997); Stephanie E Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007); Alexander X Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers Black Migrants across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge, LA.: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade,*

trade's complexity and the African experiences of their enslavement. I contend, however, that historians can also use a comparative perspective to take a capacious view of the process of enslavement and show how that process shaped the forced migration of Africans in the Atlantic World.

I have focused on Britain's slave trade both because of its size and because Britons traded at a plethora of locations in both Africa and the Americas. Compared to the Portuguese (the largest individual slave trading nation) whose trade was concentrated on Brazil and Angola, British slaving vessels dropped anchor at almost every port on the African coast; they disembarked enslaved Africans at an equally expansive number of locations in the Americas, especially the numerous Caribbean islands and the North American colonies. Examining Britain's slave trade therefore enables me to compare and contrast trading practices across space and time. The chronological scope of this project is bounded by two important events that marked the beginning and end of Britain's trans-Atlantic slave trade: the emergence of plantation agriculture in the British Caribbean—and especially widespread sugar cultivation—in 1640, and the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1808. The volume of Britain's slave trade peaked in the second half of the eighteenth century, and so I focus principally on that period, while drawing on earlier records to show important antecedents in trading practices.

The Long Middle Passage had five distinct stages: initial enslavement; sale on the African coast; the Middle Passage; sale in the Americas; and "seasoning" in the colonies, to each of which I devote a chapter. The decision to devote equal attention to each stage of an African's enslavement is a deliberate one. To date scholars have largely focused their attention on the notorious Middle Passage, the approximately ten-week oceanic voyage between Africa and the

1600-1830 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Audra A. Diptee, *From Africa to Jamaica: The Making of an Atlantic Slave Society, 1775–1807* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2012).

Americas.[4] By focusing on the Middle Passage, however, historians have obscured the other important, and usually much more drawn-out, stages of a person's enslavement in Africa and the Americas. Africans spent weeks, months, and even years as a slave in the interior of Africa before making sometimes lengthy forced marches to the coast. Once they reached the Americas, significant numbers of Africans spent long periods within an equally complex and well-organized domestic slave trade. The sales of enslaved people on both sides of the Atlantic—which have received scant scholarly attention—were also crucial stages on an African's tortuous journey into slavery. The Long Middle Passage was, I argue, a complex and winding system of paths that Africans were forced along by slave traders, an experience that could take several years and ultimately lead to a variety of destinations on either side of the Atlantic.

My central contention is that the path that enslaved Africans took through the Long Middle Passage was shaped by their age, sex, and, especially, their health, because of the way that slave traders organized their purchases and sales. Slave sales were the junctions and cross-roads in the complicated system of routes that comprised the Long Middle Passage because it was at these moments that enslaved people were collected together or dispersed. Slave buyers in both Africa and the Americas sought captives who met stringent physical criteria because they wanted people who could either perform specific, often laborious, tasks, or who were in good enough health to survive arduous forced marches and oceanic voyages. Slave holders purchased captives who met their criteria and marched them on one path, leaving those whom they rejected

[4] For a small selection of the works that focus on the trans-oceanic portion of the slave route, see, Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Viking Press, 1962); Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); Jay Coughtry, *The Notorious Triangle: Rhode Island and the African Slave Trade, 1700-1807* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1981); Edwards Reynolds, *Stand the Storm: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1993); Maria Diedrich, Henry Louis Gates Jr, and Carl Pedersen, *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); James A. Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008).

to take another route that might ultimately lead to a separate destination. An African might, therefore, enter slavery with their family, villagers, or co-linguists, but subsequently find themselves taking very different routes through the Long Middle Passage as slave traders constantly sorted and separated them according to their physical characteristics.

Because slave traders constantly separated enslaved people, I emphasize that an individual person's experience of the Long Middle Passage varied considerably. One person might be enslaved and retained in the interior for the rest of his or her life while a friend or relative was marched to the coast and sold because he or she did not meet an African slaveholder's needs. A person who arrived on the African coast in good health might immediately board a slave ship while a slave from the same coffle boarded an entirely different vessel much later. The experience of enslavement in the Americas was equally diverse: people who arrived in the Americas in good health marched from the port to a plantation while their sickly shipmates remained in port or were carried to another colony entirely. The amount of time that a person took to complete the Long Middle Passage also varied enormously. Some captives might complete the journey from African to American slavery in the space of a few months; others spent years wending their way through tortuous slave routes. A captive's path to slavery was not the straight leg of a trans-Atlantic triangle but rather a potentially drawn out journey through the Long Middle Passage—a complex network of slave trading routes that spanned the Atlantic.

To date, numerous scholars have proposed other theories of the process of enslavement. Anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Richard Price articulated perhaps the most influential model in their short 1976 essay *The Birth of African-American Culture.* The slave trade played an important role in "randomizing" Africans, they claimed, by mixing them with other people with

whom they did not share a common culture. Africans had first to deal with the "traumata of capture, enslavement, and transport," when they were separated from "kinsmen, tribesmen, or even speakers of the same language," and then "shackled together in the coffles, packed into dank 'factory' dungeons, squeezed together between the decks of stinking ships." In an oft-quoted passage, Mintz and Price asserted that Africans arriving in the Americas were not culturally homogeneous "groups," but rather "crowds, and very heterogeneous crowds at that." Out of necessity, members of these "crowds" created creole cultures in the Americas, which were amalgamations of African and European elements.[5]

In 1992, Atlantic historian John Thornton proposed a new model. Slave ships typically embarked their entire human cargo at a single port, Thornton pointed out, and those ports tapped into distinct "cultural zones" in the hinterland where people spoke similar languages. The captives who embarked on slave ships were, as a result, "extremely homogeneous," and so a ship might be filled "not just with people possessing the same culture, but with people who grew up together." The slave trade, Thornton concluded, "did little to break up cultural groupings." Neither did the Middle Passage "deculture" Africans or turn them into "highly dependent personalit[ies]" as earlier historians such as Stanley Elkins had posited. While the passage was horrific it was only "temporarily debilitating." Once Africans reached the Americas, they typically marched to plantations with people from the same "cultural grouping" and met other

[5] Sidney Wilfred Mintz and Richard Price, *An Anthropological Approach to the Afro-American Past: A Caribbean Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976), quotes from pp.2, 14, 18, 42. For a recent re-appraisal of their thesis, see, Richard Price, "The Miracle Of Creolization: A Retrospective," *NWIG: New West Indian Guide* 75, no. 1/2 (2001), pp.35–64. For works that stress the randomization of enslaved Africans, see also, Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). Numerous scholars subsequently filled out Mintz and Price's short thesis by performing detailed work on creolization in American slave societies, see for example, Trevor Burnard, "E pluribus plures: ethnicities in early Jamaica," *Jamaican Historical Review,* xxi, 8-22; Kamau Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

captives there from the same regions. "Randomization did not occur," Thornton boldly claimed, within the slave trade.[6]

Scholars subsequently built on Thornton's insights by positing that Africans belonging to specific cultural groups were transplanted to the Americas through the slave trade, not just people who hailed from similar cultural zones. Michael Gomez argued in his 1998 *Exchanging our Country Marks* that enslaved Africans belonged to specific "ethnicities," which superseded both "race and intercultural relatedness." A particular ethnicity was a group of captives who were "[b]ound by language, culture, territorial association, and historical derivation," making them "unique" as a people. Once in the Americas, Africans organized their cultural lives according to their ethnicity. A growing scholarly "orthodoxy" then emerged that enslaved Africans formed "identifiable communities based on their ethnic or national pasts," as Philip D. Morgan, a critic of this paradigm argued in 1997. Since then, an outpouring of studies have traced enslaved Africans of particular ethnicities through the trans-Atlantic slave trade.[7]

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[6] John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.183-192; quotes from p.195, 162, 197, 203; pp.206-303. Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp.98-101. See also, E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family In The United States* (Chicago, IL: The University Of Chicago Press., 1940). Others scholars had previously emphasized the cultural homogeneity of Africans dragged through the slave trade for which, see, Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth Of The Negro Past* (New York: Harper And Brothers Publishers., 1941); Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. P. Green (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 1972); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). In Thornton's subsequent work, he has also located the process of creolization on the African coast itself. For which, see, Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For Atlantic Creoles, see also, Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

[7] Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998). See also Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Philip D. Morgan, "The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations and New World Developments," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no. 1 (April 1, 1997), pp.122–45. For works that have used ethnicity to analyze the trans-Atlantic slave trade, see for example, Paul E. Lovejoy, ed., *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2009); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); José C. Curto and Renée Soulodre-LaFrance, *Africa and the Americas:*

A small group of historians have used ethnicity to partially explain the forced migration of enslaved people from Africa to the Americas. Rice planters in South Carolina wanted enslaved people from Upper Guinea who purportedly had experience growing rice in their homelands, for example. "Planters knew such slaves grew rice," cultural historian Judith Carney argued in her influential 2009 work *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas,* and "they also knew which ethnic groups specialized in cultivation." Slave ship captains steered their vessels from Upper Guinea to South Carolina in response to these demands. As historian of the African diaspora Gwendolyn Midlo Hall described in 2009, the "clustering" of culturally distinct groups in the Americas therefore stemmed from the "preference of slave owners of various regions for particular African ethnicities." Louisiana planters purchased enslaved people from Senegal because of their knowledge manufacturing indigo, Hall maintains, and those slaves subsequently helped to establish the crop in the colony; Columbian colonists sought out "experienced miners from the goldfields of Bambuk or Bure in Greater Senegambia"—so called "Minas." Once an ethnic group was established in a region of the Americas, planters bought additional Africans belonging to that ethnicity, a process of chain-migration. Planter preference for Africans with particular abilities drew enslaved people to specific colonies in the Americas, and then influenced their subsequent migration.[8]

Interconnections During the Slave Trade (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005); Jose C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003); Paul E. Lovejoy, in *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken Written Unearthed*, ed. Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), pp.105–17. For an excellent summary of the work on African ethnicity and the responses by Americanists, see, Kristin Mann, "Shifting Paradigms in the Study of the African Diaspora and of Atlantic History and Culture," in *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil,* ed. Kirsten Mann (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2001), pp.3–21.

[8] For planter preferences in the Low Country, see, Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996). Judith Ann Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p.90. As Carney stated: "Also evident is the pattern of direct

In the last twenty years, then, a growing number of historians have used ethnicity as the "methodological key" for studying the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as African historians Paul Lovejoy and David V. Trotman claimed in 2003. The slave trade was not, they claimed, a single diaspora, but rather "a series of diasporas," each involving an "ethnic communit[y]." Moreover, the process of enslavement did not necessarily "randomize" captives, as Mintz and Price had claimed. Rather it united people who shared common cultures, and then transplanted them to specific areas of the Americas. The slave trade therefore tied together particular areas of Africa and the Americas so that they were, as African historian Walter Hawthorne described, "one unit-one region that stretched across an ocean." Or, as Lovejoy has put it, the slave trade was a "link as well as a gap" between Africa and the Americas.[9]

In this dissertation, I problematize the use of ethnicity to analyze the movement of people through the slave trade by arguing for the relative importance of age, gender and health. In positing this model, I argue that the African origin of enslaved people influenced their direction through the Long Middle Passage, but not in the way that historians have previously believed. By looking closely at the African slave trade and the decisions made by African traders and European ship captains on the coast, I show that the demographic profile of enslaved people boarding slave ships consistently varied between African regions. I also look closely at the morbidity suffered by enslaved people on the Middle Passage to argue that an African's point of departure had an important effect on their health. There were consistent differences between

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imports to South Carolina of slaves from outposts of English slaving along the Gambia River and Bunce Island in Sierra Leone, where this knowledge was especially concentrated." For the Black Rice debate, see, Edda L. Fields-Black, *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora*, (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2014); David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, "Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (2007): 1329–58. Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities*, p.66-69.

[9] Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), pp.2, 5. Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, p.6; Lovejoy, ed., *Identity,* p.6.

groups of enslaved people arriving in the Americas: some groups were in better health than others, and some included much larger proportions of women and children. Wherever Africans landed in the British Americas, port-based slave traders organized slave sales that channeled slaves to a variety of colonial buyers depending on the enslaved peoples' physical characteristics. I argue, therefore, that an African's origin played an important role in determining their pattern of forced migration both to and within the Americas.

I also build on the advances made through *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (*TSTD*) project. Originally published on a CD-ROM in 1999, and subsequently enlarged, updated, and published online in 2008, the *TSTD* now enables historians to discern the volume and direction of the trans-Atlantic slave trade with unparalleled specificity, including the total number of captives forcibly transported from particular African ports and their destinations in the Americas. Historians can also study the demography of the Africans, the mortality they suffered on the passage, and the dates that they left Africa and arrived in the Americas.[10] The database includes no information on the previous origins, nor subsequent destinations, of enslaved people in Africa or the Americas, however, a shortcoming that critics have been quick to point out. In a

[10] The *TSTD* grew out of previous efforts to quantify the slave trade, for which see, Philip D. Curtin and Jan Vansina, "Sources of the Nineteenth Century Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History*, Vol.5, No.2, (1964); Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p.xviii. "History of the Project," *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database,* http://slavevoyages.org/tast/about/history.faces). David Eltis, David Richardson, Stephen Behrendt, and Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Paul Lovejoy, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature," *The Journal of African History,* Vol.30, No.3 (1989), p.372. For works that have used the database to detail the volume and direction of the trade, see for example, David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 17–46; David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); David Eltis and David Richardson eds., *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London: Routledge, 2013); Jane Hooper and David Eltis, "The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 353–75; Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (April 2015): 433–61. Patrick Manning has also used digital methods to quantify the slave trade and produce complex algorithms to model the demographic impact of the trade on Africa. See especially, Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

critical review of the *TSTD,* Lovejoy notes that the database "does not really demonstrate where Africans originally lived in Africa or where they eventually found themselves in the Americas." To rectify this situation, Lovejoy has called on historians to follow enslaved people along the "slave routes" that connected Africa to the Americas, by "extrapolating and synthesizing from the known details of African history" and then "trac[ing] [enslaved Africans'] subsequent movement after ships arrived in the Americas."[11]

I have responded to Lovejoy's call by expanding the *TSTD* to describe both the African and American sides of the Long Middle Passage. I downloaded 12,011 British slave trading voyages from the *TSTD* into FileMaker, a database software program, and then added fields that detail both the African and American sides of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. For the African portion of the trade, I added fields that detailed how captains purchased slaves: the date of sale, the gender and age of the slaves, and the prices paid for the person. Using customs house data, I added information on the Middle Passage for 2,100 slave trading voyages, principally sailing out of Liverpool in the period 1782-1808. American records enabled me to add information on the sale of enslaved Africans arriving on 445 voyages, including descriptions of the slaves sold, the name of the merchants who sold the captives, the lengths of the sales, and the names of the American buyers. I demonstrate, therefore, that the *TSTD* can be used creatively to study the forced migration of enslaved people both before and after their trans-oceanic voyage.

[11] Lovejoy, "Extending the Frontiers," pp.58-9. Walter Hawthorne echoes Lovejoy by pointing out that the *TSTD* does not show "from where within Africa slaves embarking on Atlantic vessels hailed and to where in the Americas slaves disembarking from those vessels went" (Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, p.7). Midlo Hall suggests that the designers of the database may have deliberately excluded fields that indicated the ethnicity of enslaved Africans entering the slave trade. The fields in the database were, she claims, "designed to answer the questions the creators of the database want to ask, not necessarily to provide the information contained in the original documents" (Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "Africa and Africans in the African Diaspora: The Uses of Relational Databases," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (February 1, 2010), pp.136–50). See also, Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Upper Guinea Coast and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database," *African Economic History* 38 (2010): 1–27. Lovejoy ed., *Identity,* p.1.

While I use quantitative methods to study the Long Middle Passage, I am conscious of recent criticism from scholars who claim that such an approach sanitizes the violence inherent in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Marcus Rediker describes in his 2008 work *The Slave Ship: A Human History*

> a "violence of abstraction" that has plagued the study of the slave trade from its beginning. It is as if the use of ledgers, almanacs, balance sheets, graphs, and tables—the merchants' comforting methods—has rendered abstract, and thereby dehumanized, a reality that must, for moral and political reasons, be understood concretely.

To Rediker, quantitative methods reduce enslaved Africans to mere numbers in balance sheets—the very methods used by slave traders. Rediker's charge has been picked up by Toby Green in his 2015 monograph *The Rise of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589*. In a section provocatively titled "Problems with a Quantitative Approach to Atlantic Slavery," Green claims that quantification "distracts attention from seeing how the advent of Atlantic slavery affected African societies, and from thinking through what the cultural, political and social consequences of this phenomenon were." I have attempted to address these criticisms by focusing closely on the operation of the slave trade on both sides of the Atlantic, and by making use of a plethora of qualitative sources that describe the realities of enslavement for individual Africans.[12]

[12] Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, p.12. This criticism is implicit in Stephanie Smallwood's work, in which she seeks to write what she calls the "human story of the Atlantic slave trade" (Stephanie E Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), p.5). Lovejoy likewise pointed out in his review of the *TSTD* that it has a distinct "methodological issue:" "how to adjust the formal terminology of econometrics to convey the plight of the individuals who were forced to migrate. These people were not mere commodities" (Paul E. Lovejoy, "Extending the Frontiers of Transatlantic Slavery, Partially," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 1 (2009), p.65). Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.4-5. See also, Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Gesa Mackenthun, "Body Counts: Violence and Its Occlusion in Writing the Atlantic Slave Trade," Unpublished Conference Paper, Francis Barker Memorial Conference. Essex University. I have drawn extensively on the voluminous Parliamentary papers produced during the debates to abolish the slave trade. These reports include over a thousand pages of testimony by slave trading merchants, captains, sailors, planters and abolitionists on almost every aspect of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. I have also reviewed the collected works of abolitionists, especially the

In addition to the *TSTD,* I have principally drawn on the papers of British slave traders, which are sufficiently detailed to reconstruct the numerous stages of the Long Middle Passage. Prior to 1808, the slave trade was a legitimate business, and merchants and captains freely described their practices in their letters and account books, albeit in the polite tone of early modern business. Despite the participation of several hundred investors in Britain's slave trade there are only a handful of major collections extant. The voluminous papers of the Royal African Company (RAC) detail the company's involvement in the slave trade during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The records of the RAC's successor, The Company of Merchants Trading to Africa (CMTA), also include masses of records describing the slave trade on the Gold Coast during the 1760s and 1770s.[13] The papers of private merchants engaged in the slave trade are equally rich. The extensive records of William Davenport include account books for over a hundred slave ships that he financed between 1755 and 1785, including invoices recording the sale of several thousand enslaved people in a multitude of American colonies. Bristolian slave trading merchant James Rogers' correspondence with slave ship captains and American slave traders during the 1780s and 1790s are also available in manuscript. These major collections are supplemented by a handful of smaller records produced by merchants trading throughout the eighteenth century, which are revealing of the slave trade in both Africa and the Americas.[14]

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works of Thomas Clarkson, which include his interviews with sailors who were involved in the trade. Finally, I have collected, where possible, the narratives of enslaved people who experienced the Long Middle Passage.

[13] The Royal African Company operated slaving forts along the African Coast for much of the seventeenth century before losing its privilege in the early eighteenth century. After its dissolution in 1753, the RAC was succeeded by the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, a non-monopoly holding company of private slaving merchants that received an annual grant from parliament to maintain the company's slaving forts. The records for both companies are in Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading with Africa and successors (hereafter CMTA): Records, T70 series, The National Archives, London (TNAUK).

[14] William Davenport and Company and University of Keele, *The Papers of William Davenport and Co., 1745-1797*, (Wakefield: Microform Academic Publishers, 1998); William Davenport Papers, D/DAV, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool; Miscellaneous accounts, papers and correspondence of James Roger[s], merchant, of Bristol (JRP), C107/1-15, 59, The National Archives, London, For smaller collections of private merchant papers, see, *The Humphrey Morice Papers from the Bank of England, London*, (Marlborough: Adam Matthew Publications,

The records of American slave traders and planters are sporadic, but individually rich. The RAC's papers include letter books and accounts detailing how its agents sold several hundred thousand Africans in the Caribbean during the late seventeenth century. There is then a long gap in the documentary record until the 1750s, when the papers of Henry Laurens detail his sales of Africans in colonial Charleston. The recently discovered, and voluminous, papers of Jamaican slave factor John Tailyour are also revealing of the slave sales he conducted between 1785 and 1795.[15] To follow enslaved people after their sale, I draw upon the rich papers of Jamaican colonists in the period 1755 to 1792, especially the diaries of overseer Thomas Thistlewood, the letters of planter-attorney Simon Taylor, and the account book of plantation doctor Alexander Johnston. Taken together, these records are sufficiently detailed to describe how enslaved Africans were sold and seasoned in the Americas.[16]

The sources detailing each stage of the Long Middle Passage are thus geographically and chronologically diffuse, but individually rich, and so each chapter of this dissertation is structured around case studies. Over half of the Africans taken into slavery by the British were forcibly transported from just two regions of West Africa: the Bight of Biafra and the Gold Coast. I therefore focus on the internal slave trade and the forced exportation of people from

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1998); *The Hobhouse Letters, 1722-1755: Letters and Other Papers of Isaac Hobhouse & Co., Bristol Merchants* (Wakefield: Micro Methods Ltd., 1971); Tuohy Papers, TUO 4/3, Liverpool Record Office (LRO); Thomas Leyland Papers, 387 MD 42, LRO; Letter book, etc. of Robert Bostock, 2 vols., 387 MD 55, LRO; Earle Family Papers, D/EARLE/1/4, LRO; Messrs Thomas Lumley and Co of London (trading with Europe and the West Indies: sugar, rum, cotton, indigo, cloth and slaves): correspondence and accounts, C114/1-2, 156-58, TNAUK.

[15] For Laurens' papers, see, Philip M. Hamer, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, vols. 1–16 (Columbia, S.C., 1968–2003); Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, GEN MSS VOL 184, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (BRBML), Yale University. For Jamaican slave factors in the same period, see, Kenneth Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers: A Bristol-West India Connection, 1732-1837* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Sales account book from Kingston, Jamaica, 1754–60, Case & Southworth records, 380 MD 35, LRO. The largest collection of invoices for the sale of enslaved people in the Americas by private slaving vessels are in William Davenport's papers. Tailyour Family Papers (TFP), William L. Clements Library (WCL), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

[16] Thomas Thistlewood Papers, Monson MS, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT; Simon Taylor Papers, Taylor and Vanneck-Arcedeckne Papers (TVAP), *Plantation Life in the Caribbean Series: Pt. 1, Jamaica, c. 1765–1848* (PLC), (Marlborough: Adam Matthew, 2005).

these two zones, although I draw on sources that describe the trade in other African regions. To document shipboard conditions on the Middle Passage I focus on voyages out of Liverpool in the period 1782 to 1808, when a veritable treasure trove of qualitative and quantitative sources are available. The final section of this dissertation focuses on the slave trade to South Carolina and Jamaica during the late eighteenth century, where the papers of Guinea factors and planters are plentiful.

I have divided this dissertation into five chapters, each of which examines a stage of the Long Middle Passage. Chapter one studies how people were enslaved in Africa in the interior of the Gold Coast and the Bight of Biafra. Africans entered slavery by different means in both regions: in the Gold Coast, militaristic states violently captured people through expansionary wars; in Biafra, individuals entered slavery through judicial means and were then sold to a diaspora of slave traders. Despite these differences, powerful trading states in both regions marched captives to slave markets where they offered them for sale to African slave holders. These men carefully selected captives to perform either agricultural labor or skilled tasks, depending on the person's physical characteristics. The decisions made by African slave traders therefore shaped the demographic profile of the captives who arrived at the coast, not European demand. Because of political changes in the dynamic interior of Africa, the linguistic identity of captives moving to the coast also changed significantly over the course of the eighteenth century: on the Gold Coast, captives became more linguistically heterogeneous; in the Bight of Biafra, enslaved people became more homogeneous. This chapter concludes, therefore, that the identity of enslaved people entering the trans-Atlantic slave trade was influenced by the specific demands of slave holding African societies.

Chapter two describes how European ship captains purchased enslaved Africans at the British forts on the western end of the Gold Coast and at the Biafran port of Bonny. It shows that captains and fort-based officers in both regions purchased enslaved Africans according to strict criteria: captives had to fall within a range of ages and be in good health, something that Europeans determined through a de-humanizing bodily inspection. As captains neared the completion of their purchase they increased the prices they paid for slaves to ensure that their ships filled quickly, reducing the risk of mortality and insurrection. African brokers therefore offered captives to the ship captains who were nearest to leaving the coast first, in the hope of obtaining high prices. Because ship captains were highly selective, however, they rejected large numbers of slaves, who the brokers then offered to other captains. The healthiest adult male captives, who commanded premium prices, typically boarded ships immediately upon their arrival at the coast, and departed the port soon thereafter. Adolescents and women, were, however, subjected to numerous inspections by ship captains and spent longer periods imprisoned aboard ships in port. Europeans demand for healthy slaves who met particular criteria of age and health thus determined who entered Atlantic slavery.

Chapter three studies the shipboard conditions that captive Africans endured on the Middle Passage. Drawing on a new dataset that details the measurements of Liverpool's entire slaving fleet between 1782 and 1808, it shows that slave ships were much more crowded than historians have previously believed. Two months before a ship departed from the African coast, most slave ships were so crowded that the Africans could not lie on their backs at night, and could only stand in one place on the thronged deck during the day. Captains achieved this level of crowding by moving enslaved children into rooms above deck and erecting temporary platforms in the rigging. Adults were, by contrast, packed into sweltering rooms below deck,

with terrible consequences for their well-being. Epidemic diseases spread like wildfire in the crowded conditions, killing large numbers of people, and debilitating others. By the time a slave ship arrived in the Americas, the enslaved Africans who limped down the gang-plank were in varying states of health: some were on the verge of death, some were reduced to skeletons by the ravages of disease, while others survived the voyage physically healthy, but mentally scarred.

Chapter four describes how American slave traders sold arriving Africans. Planters in the seventeenth-century Caribbean purchased indentured servants and convicts according to their physical characteristics and the Royal African Company's agents readily adopted this system when they began selling enslaved Africans in the 1660s. Private slave factors throughout the Caribbean and North America emulated the Company's methods in the eighteenth century. Slave sales proceeded in a clear sequence in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: rich planters typically entered early in a slave sale and purchased healthy adults for high prices. Middling planters and tradesmen then purchased healthy children, leaving the sickly, the old, and the very young to be bought by merchants. This chapter also shows that the length of slave sales was extremely variable, because it was driven by the planters' demand for enslaved workers. When the planters' demand was high enslaved Africans were subject to violent single-day "scramble" sales. When demand plunged, Africans spent weeks, and sometimes months, trapped aboard slave ships where they were subject to demeaning inspections by potential buyers. American slave sales were usually drawn out processes that influenced the subsequent forced migration of enslaved Africans.

Chapter five focuses on the seasoning regimes that Jamaican colonists subjected Africans to in the second half of the eighteenth century. Planters marched healthy adult men and women to sugar estates and forced them to almost immediately perform hard labor in the field. Adult

men and women were subject to violent and sadistic punishments during their seasoning. Using a variety of records, this chapter also describes the internal slave trade through which colonists bought and sold sickly Africans. Speculators imprisoned Africans in storehouses and sought to restore the captives' health, and then retail them to planters, or re-export them to neighboring colonies at a profit. The mortality suffered by these unhealthy captives—many of whom were on the verge of death when they were sold—was extremely high and so, this chapter concludes, historians need to revise their estimates of the mortality of enslaved Africans immediately following their sale in the Americas.

This dissertation offers the Long Middle Passage as an interpretive framework through which to see the slave trade, a framework that spans the Atlantic and connects Africa to the Americas. It draws on a large and disparate source base that sheds new light on practices that have, until now, escaped the attention of historians, especially the sales of enslaved people on the coast of Africa and in the Americas. Situating these practices within the wider context of an African's entire ordeal of enslavement gives us a better understanding of the oft-studied Middle Passage and the important role it played in shaping the forced migration of people to, and within, the Americas. This dissertation's findings will therefore provide an important underpinning to ongoing historiographical debates about the slave trade's impact on the cultural history of the Atlantic World. Ultimately, then, this dissertation will considerably expand our knowledge of how the slave trade functioned and its effects on the lives of millions of enslaved people.

Chapter 1- Enslavement in Africa

In 1739, Broteer Furro, a six-year-old African boy, was playing in his natal home, a thousand miles from the sea, when news arrived that would forever change his life. Broteer's father, Saungm Furro, heard that an army had invaded a neighboring state and "laid waste their country" and were coming "speedily" to destroy his own nation. Broteer and his villagers beat a hasty retreat but the advancing army forced them to battle. The women and children hid in reeds but they were found by the invaders who gave Broteer a "violent blow on the head" and seized him. A soldier then tied a rope around his neck, and put him in a coffle with the women and his father, who had surrendered in battle along with the other men. Marched to a nearby camp, the six-year-old Broteer looked on helplessly while he father was tortured to death. The soldiers took Broteer and the "women prisoners" and pushed them towards the sea, an arduous journey during which Broteer was forced to carry a soldier's weapons and baggage and a twenty-five pound grinding stone on his head. When the army reached "Anamaboo," a nation that was "contiguous to sea," they were attacked and themselves defeated. Broteer was thus "taken a second time" and marched to the Gold Coast, where he was sold to the steward of the *Charming Susanna*, a Rhode Island slave ship. Renamed Venture Smith, Broteer began a new life, traumatized and alone as an Atlantic slave.[17]

We know about Broteer's experience of enslavement in Africa because he eventually reclaimed his freedom and wrote a memoir in which he recounted the details of his past lives. The compelling life stories of almost every other of the twelve and a half million people who were sold into Atlantic slavery are all but lost. Few records survive that document the many

[17] Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa…* (New London, CT, 1798). For Venture Smith, see, Chandler B. Saint and George A. Krimsky, *Making Freedom: The Extraordinary Life of Venture Smith* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009); James Brewer Stewart ed., *Venture Smith and the Business of Slavery and Freedom* (Boston, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010).

individual pathways that people were forced to take into African slavery, sources that are crucial if we want to understand the identity of the millions of people who were dragged to the Americas. The routes that enslaved Africans took into slavery can, however, be described by synthesizing social histories of African societies, most of which do not deal directly with the slave trade. These works reveal how people became slaves, as well as the decision making process of African slaveholders when they elected who to retain in their own households and who to send to the coast for sale.[18]

In recent years, historians have emphasized that decisions made by African slave traders shaped the demography of enslaved people entering Atlantic slavery. In the 1980s, a "tacit agreement," in Atlantic historian Joseph Inikori's words, emerged that attributed the male majority in the slave trade to the desire of American planters for "more males than females." Since the 1990s, however, a growing body of scholarship has contended that it was African, rather than European, preferences that determined the sex ratios of the enslaved people who were carried to the Americas. African slaveholders preferred to retain women because they put them to work in gendered agricultural tasks and wanted to increase the sizes of their polygamous

[18] Works by African historians on individual slave trade are too numerous to list, but highlights include: Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Kwame Yeboa Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast: 1600-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); Ray A Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa 1550-1750 / the Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Robin Law, *Ouidah: Social History Of West African* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004); I. A. Akinjogbin, *Dahomey and Its Neighbours, 1708-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760-1900* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007); Joseph Calder Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours Under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); Phyllis Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast, 1576-1870; the Effects of Changing Commercial Relations on the Vili Kingdom of Loango*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil During the Era of the Slave Trade*, 1st ed. (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert W Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500-1891* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981).

households. European demand for males provided a convenient opportunity to sell potentially restive and surplus captives in exchange for imported goods. African masters were not a monolithic group and slaveholders elected who to send to the coast and who to retain based on the cultural and social norms of their particular societies. In areas of the coast where slaveholders in the hinterland wanted to retain greater numbers of men, Europeans were obliged to purchase much higher proportions of women. Scholars are now in general agreement that the demands of Africans, rather than Europeans, shaped the sex ratios of captives who entered Atlantic slavery.[19]

This chapter also examines the decisions made by African slave traders but it principally studies how those decisions shaped the ethno-linguistic identity of captives entering Atlantic slavery. It focuses on two coastal regions—the Gold Coast, and the Bight of Biafra—which jointly supplied over half of the captives to British slave ships (Table 1.1). Well-organized slave holding societies—the Asante on the Gold Coast, and the Aro in the Bight of Biafra—emerged in both regions and rapidly expanded during the eighteenth century, dragging increasing numbers of people into the slave trade. The desire of African slaveholders to expand their power and wealth by acquiring enslaved followers, a process enabled by the trans-Atlantic slave trade, drove the expansion of the Asante and Aro. African slaveholders retained captives of particular ages and gender, and sent others to the coast for sale in exchange for European trade goods. The identity of captives arriving on the coast was therefore shaped by the preferences of Africans, not European demand for enslaved people from particular ethno-linguistic cultural groups.

[19] Joseph E. Inikori, "Export versus Domestic Demand : The Determinants of Sex Ratios in the Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Research in Economic History*, Vol. 14, (1992), p.118. For works that argue for the importance of the African slave trade in shaping who entered the Atlantic slave trade, see for example, David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, "Was the Slave Trade Dominated by Men?," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 2 (1992): 237–57; David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, "Fluctuations in Sex and Age Ratios in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1663-1864," *The Economic History Review* 46, no. 2 (1993): 308–23; Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Competing Markets for Male and Female Slaves: Prices in the Interior of West Africa, 1780-1850," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 261–93. G. Ugo Nwokeji, "African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 47–68.

Table 1.1 Enslaved Africans forcibly exported by region (thousands), 1601-1808

	Sene-Gambia	Sierra Leone	Windward Coast	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra	West Central Africa	Indian Ocean	Totals
1601-1650	6	1	0	2	0	24	1	0	34
1651-1700	34	5	0	72	101	116	47	19	395
1701-1750	73	20	16	303	143	204	194	12	965
1751-1800	109	119	163	293	95	582	216	3	1,581
1801-1808	5	18	17	49	14	105	77	17	284
Totals	226	162	201	718	354	1,031	534	32	3,257
	7%	**5%**	**6%**	**22%**	**11%**	**32%**	**16%**	**1%**	

***Source**: TSTD*, Estimates Section, British flagged vessels.

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Forcibly exported from the Gold Coast, Akan speakers, or "Coromantees" as they were contemporarily known, played a central role in the formation of British American slave culture. According to African historian John Thornton, "forty percent of the people of African origin" in Jamaica spoke Akan by the mid-eighteenth century making it "probably the single most commonly spoken first language on the island" even above English. Another African historian, Kwase Konadu, claims that the Akan molded slave culture through "their leadership skills in warfare and political organization," their militaristic culture, and contributed to slaves' "medicinal knowledge" through "plant use and spiritual practice." Frederick Knight, a historian of the African diaspora, points out that the Akan altered the "political landscape of the Caribbean" by rebelling against their enslavement in such famous incidents as Tackey's revolt, which shook Jamaica in the 1760s. American colonists knew that the Akan would "Chuse death before dishonourable bonds," as Barbadian sugar planter James Grainger explained in 1764. Even so, planters sought to purchase Akan speakers above other slaves because they were typically "healthy" and "young," and took "to labour with great promptitude and alacrity, and

have constitutions well adapted for it," as Jamaican sugar magnate Bryan Edwards described in his history of the British West Indies.[20]

In the Gold Coast region, the largest and most powerful Akan state, Asante, sold the majority of the captive Africans destined for the British Americas. Despite Asante's importance to the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade there is not, as T.C. McCaskie, the leading historian of Asante, points out, a "comprehensive treatment of the Asante slave trade." In order to understand how captives were enslaved and sold on the Gold Coast this section re-constructs the Asante slave trade using a number of social histories of Asante. Asante initially enslaved people through violent expansionary wars and then by exacting tributary slaves from vassals who in turn launched wars on neighboring states. Asante slaveholders channeled these prisoners to Kumasi, the capital of Asante, where they were typically put to work on plantations growing crops for market. Asante masters subsequently released slaves for sale to the coast, especially those who were foreign born, according to the rhythms of the agricultural calendar. Slaves sold at the coast were, as a result, atomized and linguistically diverse, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, when Asante increasingly enslaved non-Akan speakers. The cultural

[20] For the importance of the Akan, see, Kwasi Konadu, *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Frederick Knight, "Sankofa: Slaves From The Gold Coast And The Evolution Of Black Culture In North America," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, no. 10 (January 1, 2006), pp.183–96; John K. Thornton, "The Coromantees: An African Cultural Group in Colonial North America and the Caribbean.," *Journal of Caribbean History* 32, no. 1/2 (June 1, 1998), pp.161-178. A recent study discovered that people from the Gold Coast left a lasting physical imprint on modern Jamaicans as they were, a recent DNA study found, "the largest single source of Jamaican slaves," who "arrived, remained and survived" on the island (Simon P. Newman et al., "The West African Ethnicity of the Enslaved in Jamaica," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (September 1, 2013), pp.376–400). Patrick Manning is one of the few historians to have claimed that the Akan were not the primary group of people shipped off from the Gold Coast. After 1700, he suggests, the "total number of slaves exports from [the Gold Coast] increased, but that now they tended to be taken from the periphery of the Akan population rather than from its core as before" (*Slavery and African Life*, p.65). For the planters' preference for Akan-speaking people, see, James Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane: A Poem: In Four Books* (London, 1764), IV, pp.129-30; Bryan Edwards, *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies. in Two Volumes* (Dublin, 1793), II, p.59.

identity of the "Coromantee" thus shifted considerably over the course of the eighteenth century as people from different regions of the interior were enslaved and marched to the coast.[21]

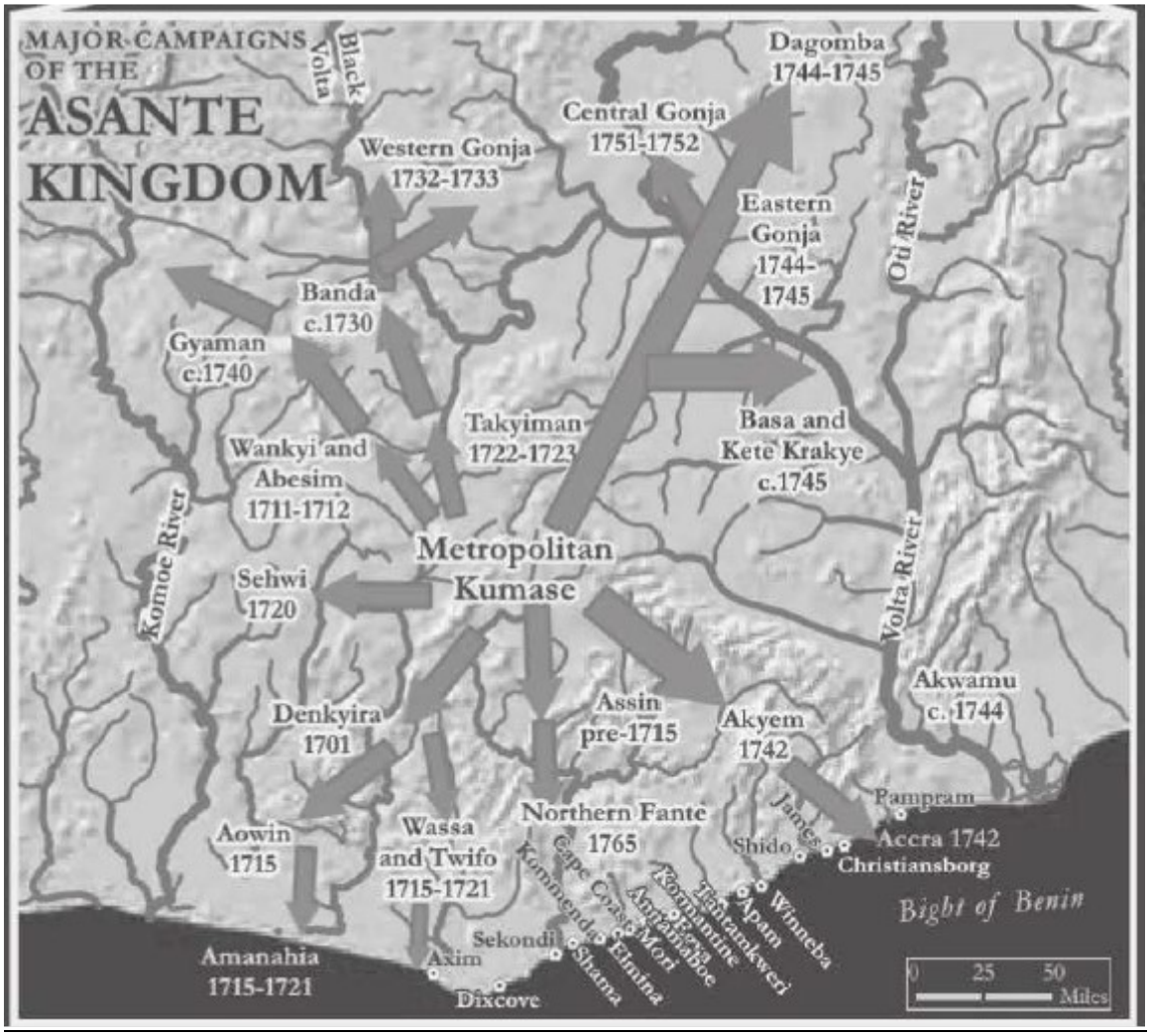
When Europeans first visited the Gold Coast in the fifteenth century they encountered people who spoke mutually intelligible dialects of a common language—Akan—but who were politically fragmented; even as late as 1629, there were forty-three tiny states in the immediate vicinity of the coast alone. Warfare between the small states was endemic but did not result in the emergence of large polities until the end of the seventeenth century when Denkyira, an Akan state in the interior of the western Gold Coast, and Akwamu, an Akan state situated several miles up the River Volta used their new tactics to win a series of crushing victories over the coastal nations. Whereas coastal states had fought wars using, as Africanist Ray Kea has described, "heavy-armed infantry and shock tactics," inland commanders "began to rely more and more on the primacy of light-armed infantry and firepower," by replacing javelins and spears with European muskets—a "gunpowder revolution." Both Denkyira and Akwamu enslaved their vanquished enemies and either kept the prisoners or sold them to Europeans, causing a noticeable surge in slave exports from the Gold Coast in the last years of the seventeenth century.[22]

In the early eighteenth century, Asante rose to prominence and became the principal power on the Gold Coast. As a vassal of Denkyira, Asante had resented the annual levy that it

[21] T.C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.376.
[22] For early warfare on the Gold Coast, see, Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Polities,* p.27; John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.55-74. For the early history of Asante, see, John Kofi Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbours, 1700-1807* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp.27-56. For Awkwamu, see, Ivor Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire, 1650-1710," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 3, no. 2 (1957): 25–62. In the second half of the seventeenth century Europeans ships carried off just two thousand captives from Gold Coast ports every year; on the adjacent "Slave Coast," by contrast, Europeans annually exported over five thousand people (*TSTD,* estimates section, Gold Coast and Bight of Benin, 1651-1700). For the Gold Coast during the seventeenth century, see, Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2014), pp.42-43.

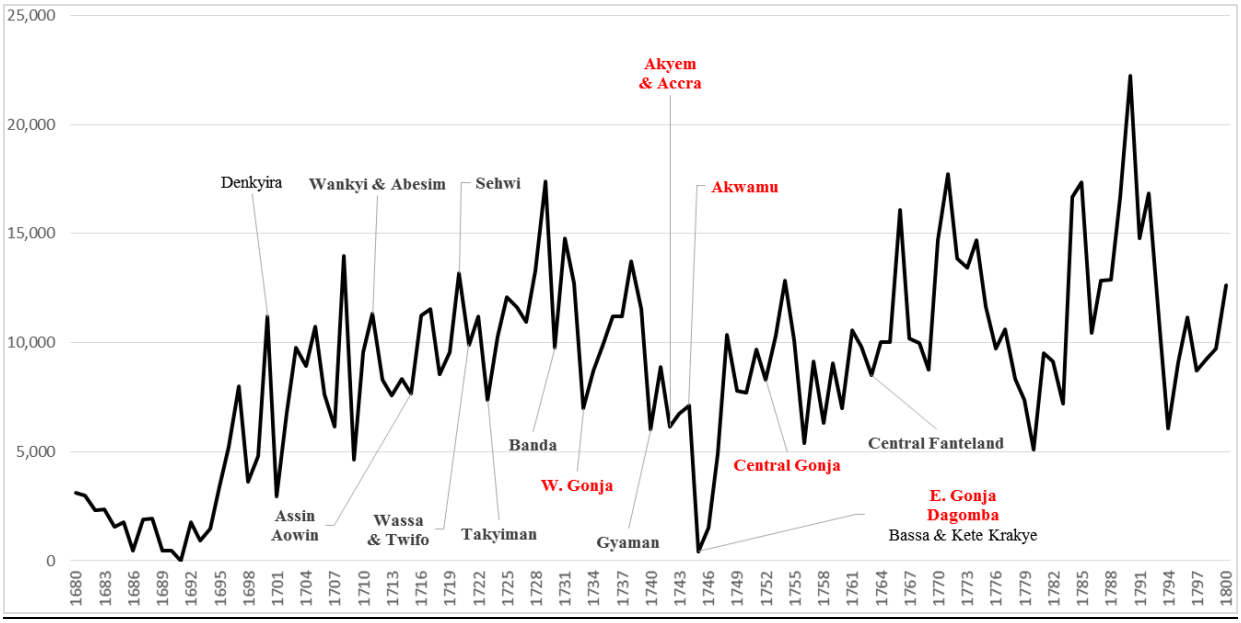
had to pay and launched a successful war of independence that lasted from 1699 until 1701. Asante then embarked on a series of wars of expansion that lasted almost without pause until 1752 and drew a large swathe of the interior into its orbit. The Asante campaigns can be divided broadly into three stages. In the first, between 1700 and 1730, Asante conquered its immediate Akan-speaking neighbors to the north, west, and south. Asante generals then turned their attention to the Akan speaking states of Gonja, north of the river Volta, and Akyem, to the southeast. In the 1740s and 50s, Asante further expanded into the savanna region north of the River Volta by completing its conquest of Gonja and the Gur-speaking state of Dagombe. Asante armies also defeated the polyglot states of Accra and Akwamu to the south-east (Figure 1.1). Asante's ascendency coincided with an explosion in the number of captives shipped off from the Gold Coast. Between 1701 and 1745, when Asante waged almost constant war on its neighbors, 285,000 people were carried from the Gold Coast, just over six thousand a year (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1: Major Asante campaigns, 1701-1765



Source: Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp.127

Figure 1.2 Enslaved Africans carried from the Gold Coast (number) and Asante campaigns, 1680-1800



Sources: *TSTD*, estimates section, Gold Coast; Wilks, Asante, p.19. States in red are non-Akan speaking

In the second half of the eighteenth century Asante all but ceased major campaigns, and instead worked to incorporate the conquered states into a centralized empire. Low level conflicts continued for years in lawless and violent lands where kidnappers preyed on travelers and marauders sacked villages. The Akan-speaking southern regions of the country were particularly hard to subdue because the land was hilly and thickly forested and so Asante used what Ivor Wilks, the doyen of Asante historians, calls the "continuous application of the instruments of coercion" to secure dominion. Once a state had been subdued it became a vassal of Asante and had to pay a fixed annual levy of captives and goods to its new overlord, which could be as many as a thousand people per annum for the largest polities. Asante's vassals obtained slaves by attacking their neighbors and passing them to their overlord, either by waging open warfare or by kidnapping vulnerable individuals. After their defeat to Asante in 1745, for example, the king of Dagomba, a Gur-speaking state to the north of Asante, chose to "engage in slave raiding in order

to pay his quota of the debt, by preying on the neighboring states." He also instructed Mamprusi, Dagomba's own vassal on its northern border, to raid its neighbors and obtain slaves that could then be sent on to the Asante as tribute—a three hundred-mile journey for the captives taken by Mamprusi. By forcing its vassals to obtain tributary captives from beyond the borders of its empire, Asante expanded its slaving hinterland hundreds of miles into the interior.[23]

The extent of Asante's slaving empire is evident from the testimony of enslaved people in the Danish West Indies, who described their Gold Coast homelands to the missionary Christian Oldendorp in the 1760s. The Asante, Oldendorp described, were "terrifying to their neighbors due to their might and their cruelty" because they waged "almost constant war against" them. Enslaved people from nine different "nations" said that Asante attacked them, leading to their sale on the African coast. A Tem captive, who lived in a Gur-speaking nation on the northern border of Asante, told Oldendorp that every house was "enclosed by a circular wall and secured with a gate" because the Asante were "always ready to kidnap people." Asante's access to slave markets on the coast and the imposition of tribute on defeated enemies also encouraged other nations to raid their neighbors. Members of the northern Bombra nation, Oldendorp learned, took the neighboring Gur-speaking Chamba as captives and sold them to the Asante, who then sold "them as slaves to the Whites on the Gold Coast." The Mande-speaking Sokko nation, which was on Asante's western border, waged a "constant defensive war" against their Akan neighbors, who tried to "attack their states for the purpose of kidnapping." Even so, the Sokko committed "precisely the same injustice which they detest," by attacking their neighbors and selling them as

[23] Daaku, *Trade and Politics*, p.161. Sparks, *Where the Negroes*, pp.124-26; Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.67-71; Benedict G. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana* (Accra: Woeli, 1998), p.11. For the early history of Asante, see also, Prempeh I. (King of Ashanti) and A. Adu Boahen, *The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself and Other Writings* (London: British Academy, 2003), pp.104-14.

slaves to the Akan. None of these people were within the border of Asante's empire, but they were still sucked into the slave trade by proxy wars launched by Asante's vassals.[24]

As Asante expanded outward they therefore took increasingly diverse people as slaves. Until 1730, Asante waged war solely on its Akan neighbors and so the majority of people they enslaved would almost certainly have been Akan-speaking. Once Asante expanded the slaving frontier north, west, and east, however, the linguistic diversity of captives increased dramatically and so, from 1730 onwards, large numbers of captives hailed from non-Akan speaking regions. Between 1730 and 1752, Asante waged almost continual war on Ewe and Ga speaking people in the southeast, and Gur speakers in the north. Although Ewe and Ga speakers could understand Akan through commercial exchanges, Gur speakers were unintelligible to the Akan: the Asante knew the Gur speaking Chamba as the Kassenti, Oldendorp related, because that is what they "called out …when they fall into the hands of the marauding [Asante]." Kassenti meant, in the Gur language, "I do not understand you."[25]

The burden of tribute also fell most heavily on the non-Akan states, increasing the diversity of prisoners sent to Asante. As Wilks describes, the Asante state comprised three concentric rings, with metropolitan Asante at the center, surrounded by a band of inner and outer

[24] The enslaved people who Oldendorp interviewed were in the Danish West Indies, which drew almost ninety percent of its imported Africans from the eastern Gold Coast, where the Danes possessed a string of slaving forts. As Oldendorp himself wrote, "Most of the slaves that are brought to the West Indies are from there [the Gold Coast]" (Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp *C.G.A. Oldendorp's History of the Mission of the Evangelical Brethren on the Caribbean Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John.* Johann Jakob Bossard, Arnold R. Highfield, Vladimir Barac eds and trans. (Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma Publishers Inc., 1987), pp.162-63). Oldendorp described the Asante as the "Mina," a term that has confused some historians because of its various uses in the Americas. On the Mina, see also, Robin Law, "Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans in the Diaspora: On the Meanings of 'Mina' (Again)," *History in Africa* 32, no. 1 (2005), pp.247-67. Ludewig Ferdinand Romer, *A Reliable Account of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. Selena a Winsnes (Brooklyn, NY: Diasporic Africa Press, 2013), p.125.

[25] For the timing of Asante campaigns, see, Sparks, *Where the Negroes,* p.167. Oldendorp, *Caribbean Mission,* p.164. For the bilingualism of Ga and Ewe speakers, see, Thornton, "The Coromantees," pp.165-66. Wilks, *Asante,* pp.52, 64-71, 71-2. For the linguistic identity of captives exported from the Gold Coast, and interviewed by Oldendorp, see, Adam Jones, "Oldendorps Beitrag zur Afrikaforschung" in Gudrun Meier et al. (eds.), *Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp, Historie der Caraibischen Inseln Sanct Thomas, Sanct Crux und Sanct Jan: Kommentarband*. = Unitas Fratrum, Beiheft 19 (2010), pp.181-190.

provinces. Residents of metropolitan Asante and the adjoining Akan-speaking inner provinces were exempt from tribute and instead paid taxes in gold directly to Kumasi, the Asante capital. The inner provinces also enjoyed greater security from raiding because of the relative strength and stability of the state. Mande, Gur, and Ewe speaking people principally inhabited the tribute paying outer provinces, and were much more apt to be kidnapped or taken in raids to pay Asante's annual tributes. The relative risk of enslavement in the non-Akan territories also increased over the eighteenth century, as Asante forcibly relocated large numbers of rebellious Akan speaking people into the inner provinces. As Asante consolidated its empire, then, increasing numbers of non-Akan speaking people on the outer borders of the empire were in danger of being enslaved.[26]

Akan speaking people were relatively well insulated from violent seizure in warfare, but were not immune from entering slavery for supposed crimes or by being kidnapped when travelling. Numerous crimes were punishable with enslavement in Asante, especially adultery and failure to pay trading or gambling debts. "A wealthy and distinguished man" from the Gold Coast told Oldendorp, for example, that he staked three of his servants in a game of chance "having already lost all of his cash." One of the staked servants fled, fearing that he was to be sold, leaving the man's owner to be "seized and sold into slavery to the whites." Unscrupulous kidnappers also waylaid or duped people. Travelling merchants of all Akan nations were frequently seized by kidnappers and immediately sold away because their friends and relatives would not know what had happened to them. A former Asante slave trader was seized by the Europeans at a Danish fort after a dispute over a marriage contract, for example. The man was shipped to the Danish West Indies where he met Oldendorp and recounted his story. Children

[26] Wilks, Asante, pp.83-87.

were the most at risk of being kidnapped. In 1720, a travelling merchant convinced Albert Gronisaw, a fifteen-year-old born far to the north of the Gold Coast, to leave his home by telling him that he could see "houses with wings" that "walk[ed] upon the water" and "should also see the white folks." Gronisaw followed the merchant to the sea, where he was sold.[27]

Organized violence was the primary means by which people were enslaved on the Gold Coast either through expansionary wars launched by Asante to subjugate its neighbors, or in proxy wars undertaken by Asante's vassals to obtain captives for tribute. So common was the seizure of slaves through raiding that Thomas Trotter, surgeon aboard the ship *Brooks,* which traded on the Gold Coast in 1783*,* recalled that the boys aboard the ship "played a sort of game, which they called, Slave-taking or Bush-fighting," in which they were "sallying and retreating, and all other gestures made use of in bush fighting." People enslaved within Asante's borders—either for crimes, or by being kidnapped—joined this steady stream of captives from the provinces. Trotter remembered that other captives showed him "by gestures of motion" how "robbers" had "come upon them" and taken them prisoner. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, people entering slavery in Asante were, regardless of the means of their capture, diverse in their origins: captives speaking Akan entered slavery alongside prisoners from the Ga, Mande, Ewe, and Gur lands on Asante's outer borders.[28]

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[27] Oldendorp, *Caribbean Mission,* p.209; Oldendorp also met the son of a wealthy African who had been sold into slavery because of his "obsessive gambling." The man's father sold him because he "despaired over his son's ever giving up his addiction" (p.210). On gambling as a means of enslavement, see also, Testimony of Jerome Bernard Weuves in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 68, p.130; Testimony of John Fountain in Ibid., p.160; and Testimony of James Penny in Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council appointed for the Consideration of all Matters relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations. . . . (London, 1789), p.33. For enslavement via the judiciary on the Gold Coast, see, Romer, *A Reliable Account,* pp.143, 163; Selena Axelrod Winsnes, ed., *Letters on West Africa and the Slave Trade. Paul Erdmann Isert's Journey to Guinea and the Carribean Islands in Columbia* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), pp.133-4, 137, 141. James Albert Ukawsaw Gronisaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw…* (Kidderminster, 1772), p.7. For the kidnapping of travelers and children, see also, Romer, *Reliable Account,* pp.131, 170, 172-4, 178.

[28] Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.83.

Asante masters took newly enslaved people toward Kumasi, the capital, along a network of "great roads," which were lined with slave markets. By the late eighteenth century, 500,000 people lived in the area around Kumasi, a town of at least 10,000 people that served as the center of government and the economy, and which had numerous laborious posts for captives. The king (*Asantehene*) resided at Kumasi, along with numerous "big-men" (*abirempon*) who held political offices and commanded the militias that comprised the Asante army. Both the *Asantehene* and the *abirempon* measured their prestige and wealth through the possession of gold and subjects (*nkoa)*, be they freemen or slaves. The *Asantehene,* who possessed newly enslaved prisoners of war and tributary slaves, therefore expanded his power by retaining some captives and sold or gave others to the *abirempon* to ensure their loyalty. The *abirempon* put slaves to work as pioneers in their armies and also sent them armed into battle; as one 1817 visitor to Kumasi found, the Asante's "invariable policy" was to make recently conquered people the "van of their army." Merchants employed bondsmen as guards and porters for their caravans and even sent out well-trusted slaves as travelling vendors; artisans purchased skilled slaves and had them manufacture items for the market. Asante men purchased female slaves as domestics and took some as wives, the children of whom became free. Other captives toiled in gold mines in the hills around Kumasi, a task reserved for foreign slaves because the Asante had a taboo against the dangerous and laborious work.[29]

[29] For the great roads, see, Wilks, *Asante,* pp.1-42. Akosua Adoma Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15th to the 19th Century* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004), pp.37-41; Sparks, *Where the Negroes,* pp.127-8; Thornton, *Warfare,* p.73. For Kumasi, see, Wilks, *Asante,* pp.83-93, 376-8. For the social structure of Asante, see, McCaskie, *State and Society,* pp.49-58. The *Asantehene's* palace complex contained a multitude of posts for slaves: drummers, horn-blowers, umbrella carriers, bathroom attendants, fan-bearers, hammock carriers, floor-polishers, gun-bearers, heralds, linguists, accountants, and kitchen hands (Perbi, *Indigenous Slavery,* pp.94-5). For the use of slaves in the army, see, T. Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Asante, with a Descriptive Account of That Kingdom* (London, 1873), p.301. Women and children panned for gold in the rivers, and male prisoners dug out alluvial deposits, a "dangerous and risky job" because the miners had first to smash through rocks, before digging shafts down into the ground. Slaves then mined for gold nuggets, which prisoners

Asante slaveholders sought bondsmen, above all, to work on plantations and farms—the heart of Asante's economy. Initially, Kumasi slaveholders employed their bondsmen on small farms to grow crops for the household. As Kumasi bloomed into an imperial center, the *abirempon* increasingly made captives perform the heavy labor of growing crops in forest plantations. To establish farms in the dense jungle slaves had first to haul out a tangled mass of undergrowth and fell enormous trees. After clearing the land, further work was required to establish the farm: chopping down smaller trees; burning trash; fencing the plot; planting crops; and continually weeding to prevent the forest from reclaiming the land. All of these laborious tasks had to be undertaken with hoes, axes and saws. Because tasks on farms were gendered, male and female slaves were needed at different time of the year: in October and November, male slaves did the heavy work of clearing away the primary forest; from December through February, women assisted the men in burning the cleared and heaped foliage, and preparing plots for the reception of crops, and then took over the task of planting crops. Asante farmers were, Ghanaian historian Akosua Adoma Perbi writes, "almost totally dependent on slave labour" for this farm work and so slaves were from the late seventeenth century onwards, Wilks writes, "being drawn into the forestlands from both north and south" and put to work on farms.[30]

Although Asante slaveholders required a constant supply of new slaves to work their farms and plantations they also elected to send away a number of prisoners to acquire coveted European imports, especially weapons. The Asante army consisted of independent regiments of *nkoa* raised by the *Abirempon* and armed at his own expense with European firearms or weapons forged from imported iron. The *Abirempon* replaced casualties with prisoners taken in battle or

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above ground assayed and ground into dust (Perbi, *Indigenous Slavery*, pp.78-9, 85). For gold mining, see also, Winsnes, ed., *Letters on West Africa,* pp.142-3; Romer, *Reliable Account,* pp.147-150, 167.

[30] Perbi, *Indigenous Slavery,* p.70. For agriculture in Asante see especially Ivor Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* (Athens, Ga.: Ohio University Press, 1995), p.77; McCaskie, *State and Society*, p.25.

with civilians enslaved after the fighting had ended. To replace guns and arm new recruits, Asante generals also sold some captives. Asante generals therefore chose to retain a certain number of slaves and sent surplus, and potentially dangerous, prisoners away to the coast. The calculations made by Asante statesmen when faced with a large population of war captives are best described by Osei Bonsu, the *Asantehene* in the early nineteenth century. The Asante army had captured twenty thousand people in battle who had been "brought to Coomassy." There he sacrificed those he considered "bad men," and gave or sold the "good people" to his "captains" (the *Abirempon*). A number of the remaining prisoners had died of starvation, leaving a body of restive prisoners unemployed in Kumasi. "Unless I kill or sell them they will grow strong and kill my people." In the era of the slave trade, captives who could not be absorbed by the substantial Asante slave economy were thus marched to the coast and sold to Europeans. Those that could be incorporated as slaves were retained to bolster the army and increase the population of Asante, boosting the power of the state against its neighbors, who themselves sought to acquire slaves to increase their own strength.[31]

The destruction of Akwamu, a cosmopolitan Akan-speaking empire on the eastern Gold Coast, by the neighboring Akyem, and the subsequent conquest of Akyem by Asante, encapsulates the complex relationship between African politics, warfare, and the slave trade on the Gold Coast. Akwamu had expanded militarily throughout the seventeenth century from its base just to the west of the River Volta and, by the turn of the eighteenth century, it ruled over polyglot lands stretching from the Gold Coast as far as Whydah in the Bight of Benin. The Akan-speaking Akwamu therefore incorporated large numbers of Ga and Ewe subjects into its empire,

[31] For the calculations made by Asante slaveholders, see, Wilks, *Asante,* pp.83-7; Wilks, *Forests of Gold,* pp.128-44; McCaskie, *State and Society,* pp.88-101. As Wilks describes, the Asante made careful computations of both the number of men who needed to be mobilized in a military campaign, and the potential return in captives who could be resettled in Asante as farmers or soldiers.

selling others to the Europeans. Akwamu paid an annual tribute to Akyem to prevent the Akyem from raiding its exposed western border while it conducted its expansionary wars to the east. In 1730, however, Akwamu—by then at the zenith of its power—refused to pay the tribute, prompting an invasion from Akyem. Ludwig Ferdinand Romer, a Danish officer stationed on the coast during the Akwamu-Akyem war, described the subsequent conflict. To secure its rear borders during the campaign, the Akyem offered five hundred captives to Asante in exchange for a promise that Asante would "not invade their land while they were warring with the [Akwamu]." The Akyem then "overwhelmed" the Akwamu in a single day of battle, during which the Akyem slaughtered the Akwamu *Abirempon* and took "many thousand prisoners." The surviving Akwamu fled in every direction, "thousands" of whom were captured by neighboring people who "sold their catch," as Romer put it, to the Europeans. The victorious Akyem "returned to their lands" with their prisoners—a mixture of Akan, Ga, and Ewe speaking people—and sent five hundred of them to Asante to honor their agreement.[32]

Knowing that the Asante were a military threat, the Akyem chose not to sell away any more of their newly acquired prisoners and instead "kept the slaves in their land and married their native slaves to these strangers." In five years the Akwamu captives had become, according to Romer, "as good as native-born Ak[ye]ms." The Akyem continued to expand its population by "seldom" selling people away to the coast, unless they had committed the most serious crimes, while simultaneously purchasing "slaves for gold" who they used to increase "the size of their families." Asante looked on the growing power and size of the Akyem with alarm and planned to

[32] For Akwamu, see, Ivor Wilks, "The Rise of the Akwamu Empire;" Ivor Wilks, *Akwamu 1640-1750: A Study of the Rise and Fall of a West African Empire* (Dept. of History, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2001). Many of the vanquished Akwamu were taken to the Danish slave forts, sold, and then carried to Saint John's where, in 1733, they staged a daring but ultimately unsuccessful slave revolt. For the 1733 revolt, see, N. A. T. Hall and B. W. Higman, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 1992).

launch an expedition that would crush the upstart state, stockpiling weapons over "six to eight years" by selling captives to the Europeans. In 1741, the king of the Akyem boasted that he would soon invade Asante and kill the king and his captains, giving the Asante a pretext for their invasion. The war lasted just over a year and ended in a total defeat for the Akyem, who were either killed, enslaved or driven off by the Asante. Thousands of slaves therefore entered Asante—many of whom must have been the assimilated Akwamu people taken by the Akyem eleven years earlier.[33]

The case of the Akwamu and Akyem wars is revealing of the calculations made by Akan statesmen when they acquired captives. They did not always seek to send war captives to the coast for sale because doing so weakened their power against their neighbors. Yet, they needed to sell some prisoners in order to obtain arms, and therefore protect themselves against their neighbors. This paradox meant that slaveholders elected, as Joseph Miller has described in his masterful analysis of the Angolan slave trade, to sell some people in order to retain others. The result for some captives was, as the Akwamu captives found, incorporation into the society of their conquerors for potentially long periods where they would be forced to learn new languages and assimilate to a new culture. Others, such as the captives that the Asante sold to acquire the weapons needed to fight the Akyem, entered Atlantic slavery. When these two processes interacted, captives could find themselves captured by one people, held for long periods as a slave, and then recaptured by an invading people and sold to the coast. To speak of "Akan," "Ewe," or "Ga" slaves is thus difficult, because the constant state of flux on the Gold Coast meant that enslaved people spent lengthy periods exposed to the cultures of their conquerors.[34]

[33] The history of the Akwamu, Akyem, and Asante conflicts are detailed in Romer, *Accurate Account,* pp.136-46**.** See also, Wilks, *Asante,* pp.26-9.
[34] Miller, *Way of Death*, pp.105-39.

When Asante slaveholders decided who to sell to the coast they chose alien people obtained from the distant frontiers because they were more difficult to incorporate into their households than Akan speakers enslaved in or near Asante. The Asante made a strict distinction between citizens of their state—earned through descent from an Asante mother—and foreign-born people brought in through migration or the slave trade. Yet, Asante society was assimilative: the children of captives who joined an Asante household could become Asante and were even protected from slurs on their slave origins by strict laws. Slaves who possessed a common language and cultural ties to their captors could gain Asante citizenship with relative ease. Incorporation was, by contrast, difficult for the *odonko* (literally "slave")—foreign-born prisoners who's halting Akan revealed their foreign origins. The *odonko* were, according to McCaskie, "ethnically diverse" having been acquired by the Asante "as tribute, through trade or purchase, or by raiding." The Asante considered the *odonko* to be, as one *Asantehene* candidly described, "no use for any thing else but slaves" because he considered them to be "stupid, and little better than beasts." The Asante put the *odonko* to the most demeaning and labor-intensive jobs such as the "heavy or dirty labour on farms," a fact encapsulated by the Asante aphorism "we buy an *odonko* because of filthy work." With minimal rights, the Asante were especially apt to sell away the *odonko* because they considered them a good. When an Asante slaveholder selected who to retain, and who to send to the coast, he consequently chose the alien *odonko,* instead of captives who spoke similar languages and possessed a similar culture.[35]

Reports from Europeans who resided on the Gold Coast during the second half of the eighteenth century confirm that Asante sent linguistically diverse prisoners to the coast. British fort officer Richard Miles, who served on the Gold Coast for thirty years, estimated that a quarter

[35] For the social status of the *odonko,* see, McCaskie, pp.95-99. See also, Wilks, *Asante,* pp.71-9.

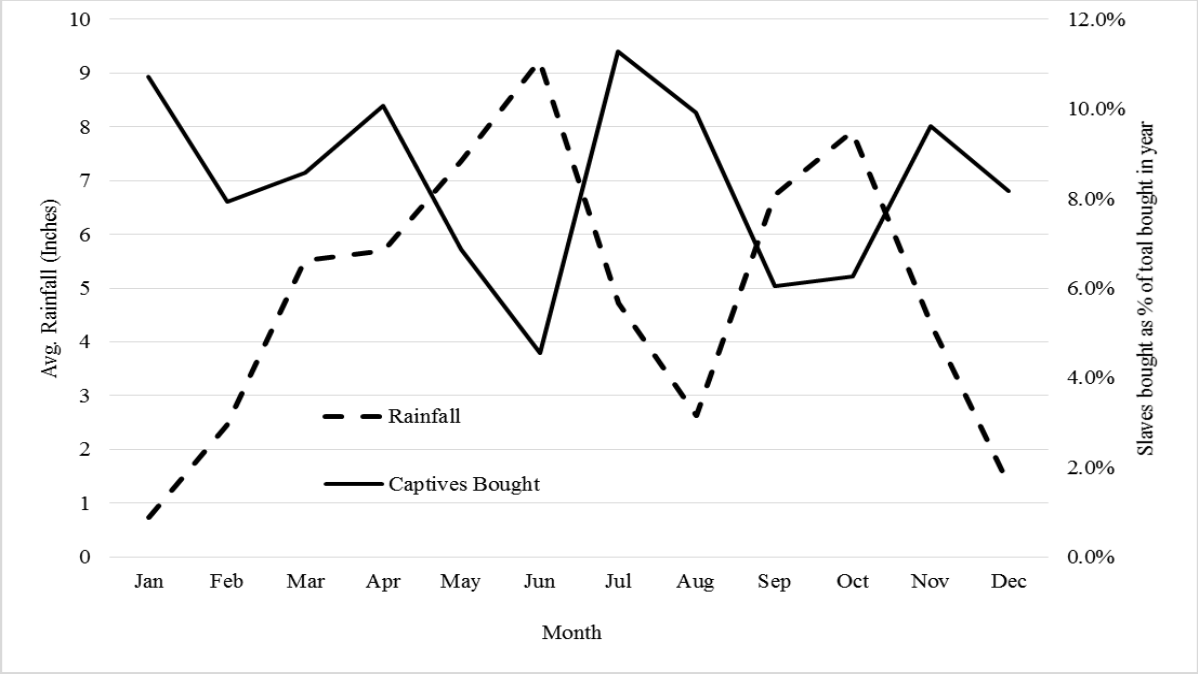
of the captives he bought in the 1760s and 1770s were Akan-speaking Fante people who came from the "water-side," and the remaining three-quarters marched down from the interior, almost certainly from Asante. The people from the interior, according to Miles, spoke languages that "differ[ed] so much… that a Lot of Slave purchased one Day, will not understand the Language of a Lot purchased the next." To Miles, this linguistic diversity confirmed that "the Countries [the inland slaves] are brought from are at a considerable Distance from each other." Jerome Bernard Weuves, a fort officer who served alongside Miles, opined that half or two-thirds of the people he bought came from "the interior parts of the Country." "When I have had twenty, thirty or forty of those [internal country] slaves together," Weuves informed Parliament, "they have not been able to understand one another." Moreover, the captives had "different modes of cutting marks on the different parts of the body," that is scarification, a practice that the Asante eschewed. During the second half of the eighteenth century, then, Asante slave holders sent away alien people to satisfy their need for imported goods, while retaining Akan speaking insiders.[36]

Richard Miles' slave-purchasing pattern shows that Asante slave holders also released captives to the coast according to patterns of rainfall, implying that the slave trade in the interior was tied to the agricultural calendar (Figure 1.3). The Gold Coast's climate is composed of two seasons: a hot, dry season that runs from November through March, and a wet, cooler season that begins in April and ends in October. Miles purchased significantly more people during the dry months and fewer captives once the rains began. Farmers required enslaved workers during the rainiest months, as most work was performed then: in October and November, slaves worked in

[36] R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book., 1771-1772, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK; Slave Barters by R.Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK. Testimony of Richard Miles in *Report of the Lords*, pp.40-1. Testimony of Jerome Bernard Weuves in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 68, p.134. For the diversity of captives sold on the Gold Coast, see also, John Adams, *Sketches Taken During Ten Voyages to Africa Between the Years 1786 and 1800...* (Liverpool, 1822), pp.6-7; Winsnes, ed., *Letters on West Africa,* p.119, 140; Romer, *Reliable Account,* pp.28, 168.

torrential downpours cutting back the forest; when the rains returned from March until June slaves put yams, maize, and plantains into the newly cleared ground. Men, who European slave traders sought above others, performed this heavy work. Asante plantation owners could, therefore, use potentially restive male captives to perform demanding seasonal labor and then release them to the coast, while retaining female captives—who performed most agricultural tasks on the Gold Coast—for the remainder of the year. Large numbers of slaves, especially men, spent periods of time working as seasonal agricultural laborers in Asante prior to their sale to the coast.[37]

Figure 1.3: Enslaved African purchased by Richard Miles (percentage per month) vs average rainfall (inches), 1771-1780



***Sources**:* The percentage of captives purchased is based upon Miles' slave barters at Tantumquerry, Annamaboe, and Cape Coast Castle, which are recorded in Slave Barters by R.Miles at Tantumquerry,

[37] For agriculture in Asante see Wilks, *Forests of Gold,* p.41-90. For Miles and his slave barters, see, George Metcalf, "Gold, Assortments and the Trade Ounce: Fante Merchants and the Problem of Supply and Demand in the 1770s," *The Journal of African History* 28, no. 1 (January 1, 1987), pp.27–41; George Metcalf, "A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s," *The Journal of African History* 28, no. 3 (January 1, 1987), pp.377–9. Captain John Matthews, who purchased slaves on the Windward Coast of Africa, likewise informed Parliament that captives were retained in the interior there during the rainy months in order to plant rice (*Report of the Lords*, p.34).

Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK; Slave barters by R. Miles at Annamaboe…, 1776-1777, CMTA, T70/1265, TNAUK; R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book., 1771-1772, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK. Rainfall levels are from Wilks, *Forests of Gold,* p.57.

Calculations made by African slaveholders therefore shaped the movement of captives from the interior to the coast and their ethno-linguistic identity. The expansionist ambitions of Asante statesmen meant that the frontier of slavery expanded rapidly during the eighteenth century, propelling thousands of people into the orbit of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The impulse behind this expansion was not solely the desire to acquire captives for sale to Europeans in exchange for foreign goods. Rather, Asante men sought to build an empire through which they could expand their own households, and therefore their power and prestige, by acquiring enslaved people. Asante slaveholders only released people to the coast they deemed surplus, either to acquire weapons that would enable the state to continue its conquests and defend against other nations, or to remove large numbers of potentially restive captives. As a result, enslaved people spent weeks, months, years, or even a lifetime in the interior, where they might be armed to defend against a neighboring state or, more likely, put to work on a plantation.

In making the decision of who to send to the coast and who to retain, Asante slaveholders were barely influenced by the European desire for Akan-speaking "Coromantee" slaves. Asante did conquer and enslave Akan-speaking people in the first half of the eighteenth century because Akan speakers were their nearest neighbors. As soon as Asante had subdued its neighbors the kingdom began to enslave speakers of other languages—Ga, Ewe, Mande, and Gur—even though European slave traders preferred supposedly superior Akan-speaking slaves. Moreover, the Asante chose to retain the Akan speakers who they did enslave because they believed that they could be more easily incorporated into their household than the *odonko,* whose scars and alien languages marked them as outsiders. In this respect, the Asante acted contrary to the wishes of Europeans, who would have preferred that the Asante retained the *odonko* and only sent Akan

speakers to the coast. The cultural identity of enslaved Africans moving to the coast was, as a result, dynamic and always shifting, as the Asante state radiated outward and because African slave holders made their own decisions as to who to send southward.

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The typical African state was not a centralized polity such as Asante ruling over extensive lands, but a small collection of villages occupying an area no larger than a modern American county. As John Thornton has noted, "medium-sized" states like Asante controlled just thirty percent of the "politically fragmented continent" of Atlantic Africa. "[M]inistates," comprising an area "not exceeding 1,500 square kilometers" ruled over "more than half the area of Atlantic Africa" and at least half of the population. Nowhere was this fragmentation more evident than the Bight of Biafra, where there was, as Lovejoy has stated, "not even any states." Despite the absence of states, Britons still forcibly exported just over a million people from Biafran ports in the period 1640-1807 (Table 1.1).[38]

Historians have focused particular attention on the Igbo-speaking people who were forcibly deported from the Bight of Biafra in massive numbers because of what Michael Gomez calls their "profound impact" on British American slave culture. According to Douglas Chambers, a specialist on the Igbo diaspora, almost a million Igbo left the Bight of Biafra between 1700 and 1807, 750,000 of whom arrived in the British Americas. The Igbo brought with them numerous identifiable cultural traits because they were, according to Chambers, a "distinct ethno-historical group who shared a distinctive set of ancestral traditions." People taken from the Bight of Biafra shaped the power relationship between whites and blacks, Chambers claims, by using resistance to force the *buckra* (an Igbo derived word) to "abide by unwritten but

[38] Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, p.103-5. Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.67.

well-known plantation customs." "Igboized" slaves used carnivals, clubs, and cults to "forge their own power ways and regulate their own lives" in the Americas, and, in doing so, left such recognizable institutions as *jonkonu* and masquerade. Numerous historians have traced the Igbo cultural influence, in particular, to Virginia and Maryland where, they have claimed, tens of thousands of Igbo speakers disembarked in the first half of the eighteenth century, making them the "predominant" cultural group there besides creoles. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Igbo became the largest single group of people brought to the British Caribbean, eclipsing the Akan, and leaving a lasting imprint on slave culture there. Although British-American planters presumed that the Igbo were apt to commit suicide, they still held them in "much greater estimation than slaves from any other part of the coast," as one Jamaican slave trader self-servingly put it, because of their "fidelity, affection, and gratitude."[39]

The enslavement of Igbo-speaking people necessarily focuses on the Aro, a trading diaspora that organized the slave trade in the interior of the Bight of Biafra during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Aro began to enslave Igbo-speaking people in large numbers during the second half of the seventeenth century, something that was primarily

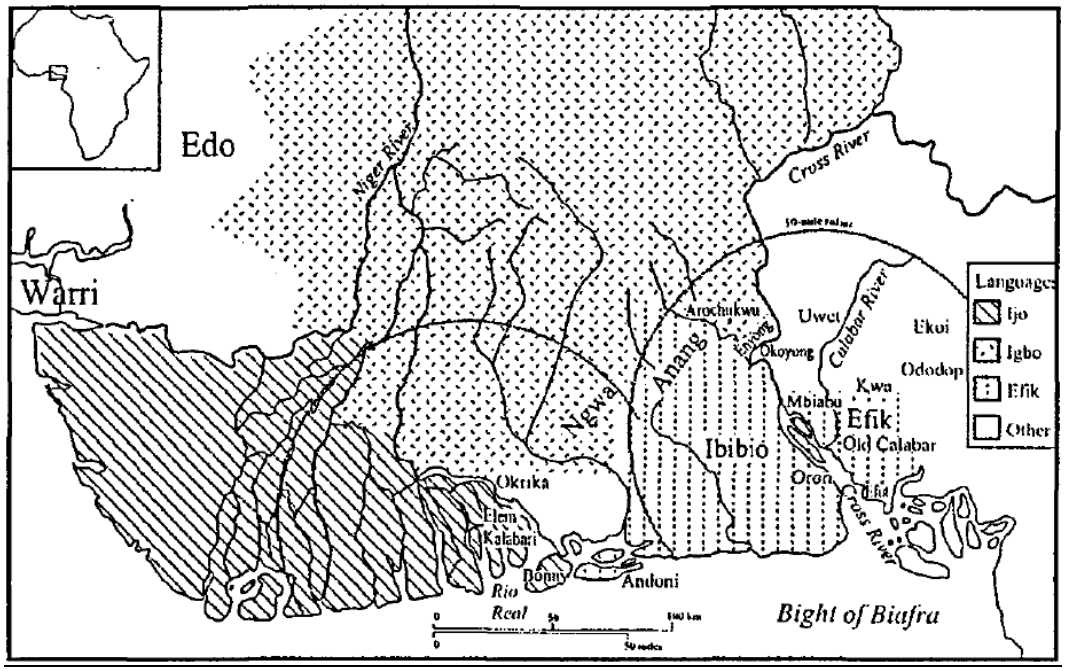
[39] Michael A. Gomez, "A Quantity of Anguish: The Igbo Response to Enslavement in North America," in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), pp.83. Douglas B. Chambers, "'My Own Nation': Igbo Exiles in the Diaspora," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no. 1 (April 1, 1997), pp.72–97, Quotes from pp.73, 86-7. See also, Douglas B. Chambers, *The Igbo Diaspora in the Era of the Slave Trade : An Introductory History* (Enugu, Nigeria: Jemezie Associates, 2013); Toyin Falola and Raphael Chiijoke Njoku, eds., *Igbo in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, Forthcoming: 2016). Lovejoy claimed that "sixty percent" of the slaves entering Virginia in the period 1718-1739 "came from the Bight of Biafra" and that they spoke "the same language… Igbo." (Paul E. Lovejoy, "Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade," in Lovejoy and Trotman, eds., *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions*, pp.20-1). For the Igbo influence on the British Americas, see also, Gomez, *Country Marks,* pp.83-4; Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove*, pp.67-76; Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities,* pp.136-7; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*; Douglas B. Chambers, "Tracing Igbo into the African Diaspora," in Paul E. Lovejoy, ed. *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2009), pp.55-71; Thornton, *Africa and Africans,* p.321; Allan Kulikoff, "The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700 to 1790," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 35, no. 2 (April 1, 1978), pp.226–59; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp.321-2. For the planters' preference for Igbo-speaking slaves, see for example, Edwards, *History,* II, pp.69-70.

motivated by the Aro's desire to expand their trading diaspora. Only when the Aro had consolidated their network of settlements and markets by the mid-eighteenth century did they begin to send significant numbers of Igbo-speaking people to the coast for sale. The slave trade in the interior of the Bight of Biafra was, like that of the Gold Coast, principally motivated by the social and political needs of African societies, in this case the Aro, rather than the external influence of European slave traders.

In the early seventeenth century, Europeans began to trade with the fishing people who inhabited the harbors, inlets, and creeks formed by the wide deltas of the Cross and Niger Rivers in the Bight of Biafra. Two ports monopolized the early trade with Europeans: Elem Kalabari (New Calabar), in the Niger River estuary, and Old Calabar, further to the east on the Cross River, where Portuguese ship captains began purchasing large numbers of slaves in the 1620s. Alonso de Sandoval, a priest in Cartagena, interviewed numerous "Caravalis" as they arrived aboard Portuguese slave ships and found that they had been enslaved near to the coast. Traders at New Calabar had bought slaves, he found, from "forty or fifty villages of various and different groups and nations," the majority of which were in the Ijo- and Ibibio-speaking districts adjoining the port—languages that were unintelligible to the Igbo because they belonged to the northwestern Bantu language family, which was separate from the Kwa family from which Igbo derived. Igbo people were certainly being enslaved and sold at this early date, but they formed a very small proportion of the captives exported from New Calabar: only one of the fifteen people that Sandoval interviewed, for example, was Igbo. Olfert Dapper, a Dutch geographer who compiled information from Dutch slave ship captains, who traded for slaves in the Bight of Biafra from the 1660s onwards, agreed with Sandoval that the captives departing New Calabar hailed from its immediate environs. They were, Dapper wrote, "prisoners of war" who "came

most from the East," that is the Ibibio speaking lands, as opposed to the Igbo lands to the north. Captives sold at Old Calabar during the mid-seventeenth century, by contrast, mostly spoke Efik and Ibibio, according to A.J.H Latham, a leading historian of the port. The limited evidence for the seventeenth-century slave trade from the Bight of Biafra thus indicates that two different networks operated in the region: the first pushed Ijo and Ibibio speaking captives to New Calabar, and the second channeled Efik and Ibibio speaking slaves to Old Calabar. Europeans did not purchase large numbers of Igbo at either port (Figure 1.4).[40]

Figure 1.4: Linguistic groups in the Bight of Biafra in the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade



***Source*:** Northrup, "Igbo and Myth Igbo," p.2

[40] Alonso de Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery: Selections from De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute*, trans. Nicole von Germeten (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2008), p.47. For Sandoval's description of "Caravalis," see also, Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities,* p.130; Thornton, *Africa and Africans,* p.62. Lovejoy contends that "many, if not most, of the different groups" of people that Sandoval interviewed "spoke Igbo," but does not explain why this would be the case (Lovejoy, "Ethnic Designations," p.17). John Ogilby, *Africa: Being an Accurate Description of the … the Land of Negroes, … Collected and Translated from Most Authentick Authors...by John Ogilby.* (London, 1670), p.483. For the early Old Calabar slave trade, see, A. J. H. Latham, *Old Calabar, 1600-1891; The Impact of the International Economy upon a Traditional Society,* First Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.9. John Watts, who visited Old Calabar in 1668, also claimed that the "slaves they sell the English, are prisoners taken in war" (Awnsham Churchill, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels...* (London, 1745), II, pp.541-2).

From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, the Aro people migrated into the Igbo lands, a process that would decisively connect the Igbo to the Atlantic World. The Aro were an ethnically diverse group of people who originally inhabited the region east of the Cross River, which they left during the early seventeenth century in search of fertile lands and trading opportunities on the other side of the river. The settlers hired Akpa mercenaries to support them against local Ibibio speaking people and, when they prevailed, permanently settled in the region and expelled or enslaved the Ibibio. They named themselves the Aro—meaning spear—and founded a capital named Arochukwu—the "spear of god." The capital sat atop a strategic escarpment at the "gateway" of the Efik lands to the east and the "the densely peopled Igbo and Ibibio hinterlands" to the south, west, and north, as Dike and Ekejiuba, the leading historians of the Aro, write. The early Aro settlers encouraged neighboring artisans, slaves, and refugees to migrate to Arochukwu, where they joined the households of the settlers. The newcomers soon became culturally Aro, but were denied economic and political opportunities by the settlers who kept the most lucrative and influential posts in the state and economy for themselves. Ambitious Aro initiates therefore trekked out into the populous Igbo lands to the west, where they hoped to establish their own households and make their fortune through trade. As commercial routes stretched further into the interior the Aro established rest stops in Igbo villages by entering into "blood pacts" that gave them land to settle upon and safe-passage when travelling, in exchange for which they offered security from raids by neighboring people. Over time, rest stops became villages, villages grew into towns, and towns bloomed into full-scale colonies. Trade routes connected each of these settlements to Arochukwu, along which large caravans of Aro merchants moved.[41]

[41] For the early history of the Aro and their later expansion, see, David Northrup, *Trade without Rulers: Pre-*

Igbo villagers sold slaves to the Aro in exchange for goods acquired in their far-flung trade network. The Igbo, like Europeans of the time, struggled with the problem of punishing criminals without being able to incarcerate them in jails. Given the smallness of Biafran polities, criminals could not be banished to a distant part of the state. Village elders imposed death sentences on the most serious felons and ordered lesser offenders to pay compensation to their victims. Once the Aro arrived, villagers imposed sale as a slave as a punishment for an increasing number of offences including theft, arson, witchcraft and kidnapping. Biafran villagers likewise sold people to the Aro who they deemed to be "trouble-makers" even if they had not committed specific crimes: the village elders determined who was an "evil-doer" and then negotiated a price for the unwitting captive with the Aro trader, who removed the person. A Biafran man interviewed by Oldendorp illustrates this process. Because of his "contentious disposition" and the "constant brawls that he had with his fellows," the man had been "ambushed" by his villagers, who sold him into slavery. The Aro also provided a means for husbands to send away unfaithful wives, masters to dispose of unruly slaves, politicians to banish their opponents, the superstitious to banish those they thought to be cursed, and the unscrupulous to exile hated fellow villagers. Economic necessity led other people to sell off supernumerary slaves and children, especially during the droughts and famines that struck the densely populated, but ecologically fragile, Igbo-speaking lands.[42]

Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp.34-6, 119-37; G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.26-37, 57-81. Kenneth Onwuka Dike and Felicia Ifeoma Ekejiuba, *The Aro of South-Eastern Nigeria, 1650-1980: A Study of Socio-Economic Formation and Transformation in Nigeria* (Ibadan, Nigeria: University Press Limited, 1990), p.44, 72-8, 119-20.

[42] For the enslavement of criminals in the Bight of Biafra, see, Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture,* pp.132-143; Northrup, *Trade,* pp.69-75. For enslavement by the oracle, see, Lovejoy, *Transformations,* p.83. Oldendorp, *Caribbean Mission,* p.210. In an early twentieth century interview, one Igbo elder candidly stated that if he was "in need of money" he could accuse someone of being a "wicked person" and the whole village would say "He is a wicked man; let him be sold!" (Quoted in Northrup, *Trade,* p.72).

Warfare, while endemic in the Bight of Biafra, resulted in few captives entering slavery, especially compared to the militarized regions of Africa, such as the Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, and Senegambia. As Dike and Ekejiuba observe, the small "village-republics" of the Igbo lands were "more or less matched in size and power" and, as a result, wars between villages tended to end in a stalemate with few casualties or prisoners. Moreover, wars did not "result in complete or widespread dislocation of life or trade" because warfare was "regulated by recognized inter-group laws" that made violence an accepted extension of diplomacy. The objective of wars was not, then, to destroy and enslave a neighboring people, but to settle political disputes through organized violence. As African historian David Northrup has rightly stated, warfare did not produce "more than a small percentage of slaves exported from the Bight of Biafra."[43]

Small-scale warfare did spillover into tit-for-tat kidnapping, a means of enslavement that historians have focused upon in the Bight of Biafra because of the famous narrative of Olaudah Equiano, who was purportedly kidnapped along with his sister 1753. If his account is true, he illustrates well how individuals, and especially children, were at risk of kidnapping throughout the Bight of Biafra. Yet kidnapping yielded very few prisoners—just two in the case of Equiano and his sister. The precautions that Biafran people took to prevent kidnapping likely made such a level of violence difficult to sustain; few people travelled into the "no-man's land" beyond their village, as Northrup points out, and the Igbo strictly punished kidnappers. Kidnapping must have been a risky endeavor and so its victims likely accounted for a relatively small proportion of the captives sold into slavery in the Bight of Biafra every year. Those unfortunate people who were

[43] The Aro did wage war on Igbo and Ibibio villages who refused to allow them access to a certain region, or who tried to drive them out from their communities. These wars usually occurred once diplomacy had failed, however, and were not primarily motivated by the desire to obtain slaves for export. In a typical battle, the Aro called in Akpa mercenaries, who slaughtered the villagers and burned the hamlet to the ground as an example to others. For Aro warfare, see, Dike & Ekejiuba, pp.161-95; Nwokeji, *Slave Trade,* pp.126-32. Northrup, *Trade,* p.68.

seized—possibly, Equiano and his sister—tended to be vulnerable children, not large groups taken from the same village.[44]

As their trading network expanded the Aro bought increasingly large numbers of slaves, and they began to march captives to four-day-long fairs at Bende and Uburu—Igbo towns one and two days' journey from Arochukwu—from which coastal brokers purchased thousands of people for resale into the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The Aro timed the two fairs so that each opened twenty-four days after the other, allowing large numbers of Igbo captives to be brought there from distant settlements and satellite markets, and gathered together in time for the opening of the fair. Coastal traders did not themselves buy captives at the fairs and instead worked through Aro intermediaries, who bought prisoners and then marched them to rivers that connected to the coast. Bonny and New Calabar traders travelled along the Imo river, sixty miles to the south of Bendu, while Old Calabar brokers went up the Cross river to Itu and Atan-Onoyon, thirty-five miles from the same market. At riverside markets, coastal brokers exchanged European goods for captives, who they bound and placed in canoes for the journey back to the coast and sale to the anchored slave ships.[45]

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[44] For kidnapping as a crime, see, Northrup, *Trade,* p.70; Nwokeji, *Slave Trade*, p.128; Boniface Obicheri, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in Niger Delta Cross River Basin," in *De La Traite À L'esclavage: Actes Du Colloque International Sur La Traite Des Noirs, Nantes, 1985*, ed. Serge Daget (Paris: Centre de recherche sur l'histoire du monde atlantique, 1988), p.53. Equiano recounts that he was employed as a guard against kidnappers, and spotted a man attempting to steal children out of a neighbor's yard. The man was "surrounded" by Equiano's villagers who "entangled him with cords" and charged him with kidnapping. Another man was brought before the court in Equiano's village for "kidnapping a boy" and was "condemned to make recompense by a man or woman slave." Equiano's villagers sold other people directly into slavery who, he recalled, "had been convicted of kidnapping." (Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (London, 1789), p.37). For raids launched by coastal slave traders up the rivers, see, Testimony of Isaac Parker in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 73, pp.124-5, 128.

[45] For the Aro trade system, and the fairs, see Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro,* pp.94-123; Northrup, *Trade,* pp.85-113; Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "'This Horrid Hole': Royal Authority, Commerce and Credit at Bonny, 1690-1840," *The Journal of African History* 45, no. 3 (January 1, 2004), pp.380-2. The Igbo had operated the fairs for hundreds of years prior to the arrival of the Aro and bartered crops, livestock, metals, crafted goods, ivory, and salt there. The Aro brokered a deal that allowed them to control the fairs, and open separate sections in the marts specifically for the sale of slaves and imported firearms.

Historians have debated precisely when the Aro consolidated its network of colonies and fairs in the Igbo lands and began to sell thousands of Igbo-speaking people at the coast. In their comprehensive study of the Aro, Dike and Ekejiuba date the establishment of Arochukwu to the first half of the seventeenth century, and the expansion into the Igbo lands from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. Chambers claims that the Aro were selling Igbo from the densely populated Nri-Akwa region of Igboland to the coast, especially Old Calabar, throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Ugo Nwokeji agrees with Dike and Ekejiuba on the date of Arochukwu's founding, but argues that the Aro did not push into the densely populated Igbo lands until the 1730s—the precise moment when slave exports from Bonny soared, eclipsing Old Calabar as the leading slaving port in the Bight of Biafra. To Lovejoy and David Richardson it is also "no coincidence that the expansion of slave exports from the Bight of Biafra from the 1730s probably occurred at the same time as the consolidation of the Aro commercial diaspora." Aro expansion was, then, "encouraged," as Nwokeji describes it, by "[t]rade with Europeans," which "increased Biafra's supply of captives."[46]

Reports from Europeans trading in the Bight of Biafra indicate, however, that Igbo slaves were available for sale at Bonny and New Calabar in large numbers from at least 1699. When slave ship captain John Grazilhier visited New Calabar and Bonny in 1699 he saw "about forty great canoes" depart the river "to purchase slaves inland." The origin of these slaves is clear from a map that Grazilhier drew up to accompany his journal: the "Hackbous Country"—a corruption of Igbo—where the Bonny and New Calabar traders "fetch all their subsistence." Grazilhier's notation is significant because it is the first time that Europeans recorded the

[46] Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro,* pp.31-93; Nwokeji, *Slave Trade,* p.31, p.51; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier*, pp.22-37; Lovejoy & Richardson, "This Horrid Hole," p.382. Northrup hypothesizes that the fairs were in operation, and tied to the coast, by "the mid-eighteenth century" (Northrup, *Trade,* p.107).

location of the Igbo. Prior to this disclosure, Europeans had not even mentioned the Igbo as a distinct people in either Africa or the Americas, with the sole exception of Sandoval, who included them in a much longer list of Biafran peoples. American colonists and European slave traders instead labelled the people forcibly exported from the Bight of Biafra—principally from Old Calabar, the major slaving port in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—as "Calabars" or "Caravalies." This appellation is also significant because it indicates that the majority of people departing Old Calabar were not Igbo speakers, but rather Efik, Ibibio, and polyglot people from the Cameroon Grasslands to the north.[47]

The Aro sold Igbo-speaking slaves at Bonny and New Calabar, rather than Old Calabar, because their trading system rested on trust and credit. The Aro's trade was predicated on a patron-client relationship, in which merchants lent goods to their numerous clients, who then travelled to the fairs to purchase slaves from other Aro returning from the colonies. The patron borrowed goods from coastal partners, a debt that was cancelled out when his clients returned with slaves. Bonny and New Calabar brokers purchased the majority of Igbo captives sold at the fairs because, as Lovejoy and Richardson have explained, they were able to borrow much larger quantities of European trade goods than traders at Old Calabar. Bonny had a centralized government headed by a king who secured credit transactions and regulated trade disputes, and so Bonny traders could carry up much larger quantities of borrowed European goods to their Aro partners. At Old Calabar, by contrast, there was no central political power, as the state comprised a loose conglomeration of powerful trading houses linked through the secret *Ekpe* society. Without the debt security provided by a king, Calabar traders pledged members of their

[47] Paul E. Hair, ed., *Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa, 1678-1712* (London: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1991), II, pp.675-91. African historian Paul Hair, who edited the journals, points out that Grazilhier's map is the "earliest naming in print of the Igbo people" (Ibid., p.702, n.5).

households as "pawns" (human collateral). Calabar traders did not possess enough dependents to act as pawns for the thousands of slaves sent down from the Aro fairs, and even if they did, the frequent seizure of pawns by Europeans when debts were not repaid would have made the system unsustainable. Old Calabar traders therefore purchased small numbers of Igbo slaves from the Aro who they sold alongside Ibibio and Efik captives brought through their older trade networks, which centered on the Cross River. At Bonny and New Calabar, hundreds of Igbo prisoners arrived in fleets of canoes from the up-country fairs every month. As a result, slave ship captains trading at Bonny and New Calabar filled their ship much faster than captains at Old Calabar.[48]

The early history of the Aro also helps to explain why they forged connections with Bonny and New Calabar rather than Old Calabar traders. The Akpa mercenaries who helped found Arochukwu hailed from the lands immediately north of Old Calabar, where they took prisoners of war and then sold them on the coast. They did not bring captives to Old Calabar, and brought them instead to the outlet of the Rio del Rey, much further to the south, possibly because the Old Calabar brokers deliberately excluded them from the lucrative trade with the Europeans. Indeed, Dike and Ekejiuba have suggested that the Akpa's exclusion from European trade by the Old Calabar brokers may have been a motivation for their migration across the Cross River to join the Aro. The earliest Aro settlers thus had few connections to Old Calabar traders, and perhaps bore them ill will. Once settled at Arochukwu, the Akpa controlled the most powerful

[48] Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (April 1, 1999), pp.333–55. On pawnship, see also, Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, C. 1600-1810," *The Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (January 1, 2001), pp.67–89. The limitations that the system of pawnship placed on the slave trade at Old Calabar is evident from statistics on the volume of the trade from the port. The largest number of captives that was ever shipped off from Calabar was 5,519 in 1791, In 1792, by contrast, 12,394 enslaved Africans were carried away from Bonny (*TSTD,* Principal place of slave purchase: Bonny & Calabar, all years).

offices of state and trade, including the throne, but still limited their connections to Old Calabar. As Dike and Ekejiuba write, the Akpa "still directed their trade to the Rio del Rey" once in Arochukwu leaving "other Aro sections" to trade "directly with Calabar." That town's traders had to purchase slaves from lesser Aro merchants, while the Akpa—the most influential group of Aro—looked for new business partners at Bonny and New Calabar once Europeans ceased visiting the Rio del Rey in the late seventeenth century. The Aro also found Bonny and New Calabar merchants receptive to the gospel of the Ibinukpabi oracle, one of the central institutions of Aro culture. Bonny merchants consulted the oracle on the succession of kings and the change of priests and worshiped a shrine dedicated to the oracle; from the late seventeenth century onwards, New Calabar traders likewise made pilgrimages to the oracle. The Old Calabar merchants, by contrast, put little stock in the oracle, which was "not normally used as a court of appeal," because they resorted instead to the collective decisions of the *Ekpe* society. The Bonny and New Calabar traders' fervent belief in the Aro oracle provided the foundations for trade with the Aro that was built on trust and credit.[49]

The differing trade networks supplying the major Biafran ports are particularly evident in the late eighteenth century, when the testimony and letters of slave ships captains trading on the coast are more abundant. John Adams, a captain who traded at Bonny in the 1790s, estimated that eighty percent of the captives coming down from the fairs were Igbo and the remaining twenty percent were "Mocos," by which he meant both Efik and Ibibio speakers. Similarly, another ship captain explained that most captives sold at Bonny in the 1780s came from the "Up Country, where the fairs are usually kept" but Ijo and Ibibio speakers came to the port "in smaller numbers, and not at regular times." A ship surgeon testified that in the same period "the

[49] For the connections between the Aro and Bonny and New Calabar, see, Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro,* pp.102-3, 146; Northrup, *Trade,* p.130; Chambers, *Murder at Montpelier,* pp.56-58.

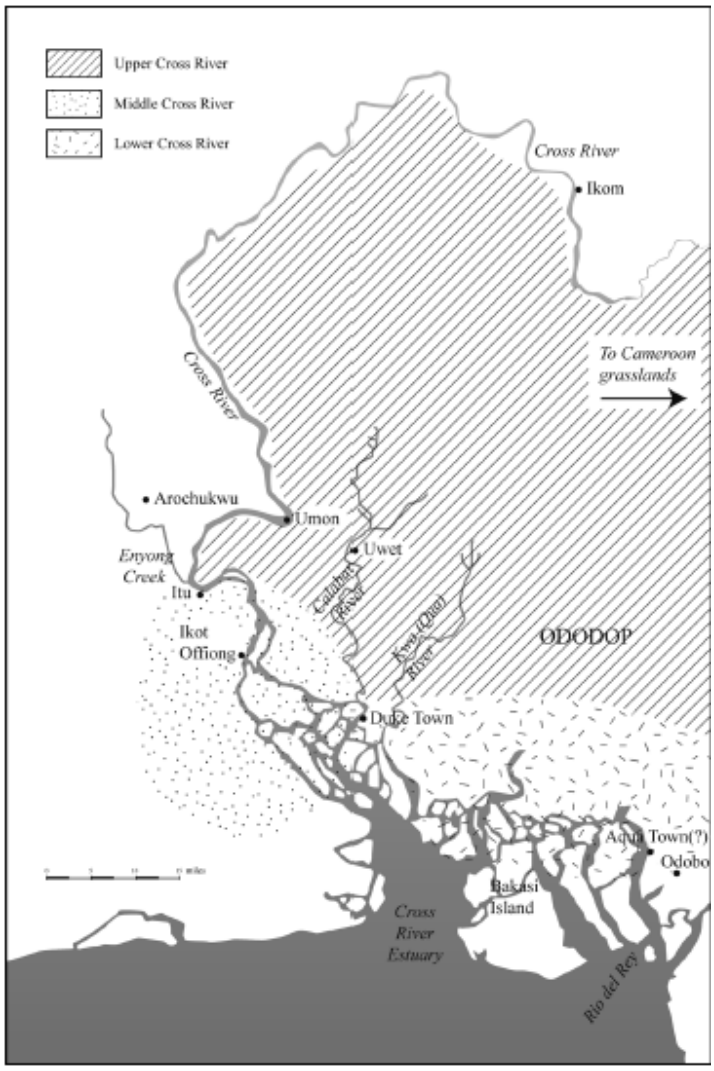
greatest number" of slaves at Bonny came "from fairs." He also noted that Bonny slave traders "frequently" bought groups of "from five to ten" Ijo and Ibibio people from coastal dealers. Captains even learned to time their purchase according to the rhythm of the fairs at Bonny: one British captain told his employers in January 1787, for example, that he "reckoned" on receiving "120 to 150 Slaves this fair" and expected other ships in the river to be fully loaded in "two fairs." Writing four years later, another captain anchored at Bonny told his ship's owner that seven vessels would be loaded with slaves once the "fair" was "down in twenty days."[50]

The diary of Old Calabar slave trader Antera Duke reveals that slave traders there purchased people in a very different trading networks. In the 1780s, the period covered by Duke's diary, Calabar brokers bought slaves in three distinct regions: the first linked to the Aro at Itu, where Calabar brokers bought Igbo captives; the second stretched over a hundred miles north-east of Calabar into the densely populated, but ethnically diverse, Cameroon grass lands; and the third encompassed the swampy estuary region of the Lower Cross River, where Efik and Ibibio speakers resided (Figure 1.5). Although Old Calabar traded with the Aro at Itu they did not link to the schedule of the fairs in the same way as the slave trade at Bonny and New Calabar. Ship captains trading at Old Calabar never mentioned the fairs as a source of slaves in their correspondence and they did not time their purchases according to the schedule of the fairs. Instead, they described a drawn out process in which Calabar brokers went up country in small

[50] Adams, *Sketches*, p.38; Testimony of James Fraser in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, pp.17-20; Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 72, p.587; Captain John Elworthy to Baker & Dawson, Bonny, January 1, 1787, E/112/1529/191, TNAUK; Captain William Woodville Jr. to James Rogers, Bonny, April 23, 1791, JRP, C107/13, TNAUK. On the "Moco," see also, Mullin, *Africa,* p.287; Northrup, *Trade,* p.61.

groups of canoes, and brought back handfuls of captives at a time, a process that tallies with that described in Duke's diary.[51]

Figure 1.5: Old Calabar trade networks, c.1785



Source: Behrendt et al. eds., *Diary of Antera Duke,* p.105

[51] Stephen D. Behrendt, A.J.H. Latham, and David A Northrup, eds., *The Diary of Antera Duke: An Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.104-113. The principal repositories for letters from captains trading at Old Calabar are in the papers of Bristol merchant James Rogers (JRP, C107/12, C10/7/2, C107/5, C107/6, C107/13, C107/13, TNAUK) and Liverpool merchant William Davenport (D/DAV/11, D/DAV/15, MMM), both of whom dispatched ships to the river in large numbers in the late eighteenth century. There are also a small number of letters from captains, and a handful of letters from the Efik traders themselves, in Gomer Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers…* (London, 1897).

Douglas Chambers attempted to calculate how many Igbo-speaking prisoners departed the Bight of Biafra but neglected to account for the differences in the trade networks supplying slaves to Old Calabar and Bonny. Between 1470 and 1600, he claimed that one in four people exported from the Bight of Biafra were Igbo. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Chambers calculates that the proportion rose to thirty-three percent, before leaping to sixty-six percent in the second half of the seventeenth century, and then eighty percent for the entirety of the eighteenth century. Chambers did acknowledge that fewer Igbo left Old Calabar than Bonny but still used the same percentages when calculating the proportion of Igbo captives shipped off from each port. African historian David Northrup performed his own calculations of the ethnic identity of captives leaving Biafran ports based upon interviews with re-captured slaves in the nineteenth century, which also showed clear differences between the ports. Northrup found that seventy-four percent of the re-captured people spoke Igbo, twenty percent Ibibio, and six percent speakers of other languages, such as Ijo. Northrup estimated that at Old Calabar, by comparison, sixty percent of the people departing the port in the eighteenth century were Igbo, and the remainder were diverse in their origins: fifteen percent spoke Efik, and twenty-five percent were a diverse assortment of people who European labelled as "Calabars." This difference must have been more pronounced in the early eighteenth century, when Old Calabar possessed weaker connections to the Aro, a period when Chambers assumed that eighty percent of the captives leaving the port were Igbo.[52]

[52] Chambers originally calculated the number of Igbo using crude percentages that he applied to rough calculations of the numbers of people exported from the Bight of Biafra which, he said, showed that eighty percent of the people leaving Biafra were Igbo (Douglas B. Chambers, "'My Own Nation': Igbo Exiles in the Diaspora," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no. 1 (April 1, 1997), p.76). When Northrup queried Chambers' numbers, he revised his estimates using the data available from the CD-ROM version of the slave trade database (Douglas B. Chambers, "Rejoinder - The Significance of Igbo in the Bight of Biafra Slave-Trade: A Rejoinder to Northrup's 'Myth Igbo,'" *Slavery & Abolition* 23, no. 1 (April 1, 2002), pp.101–20). I have used Chambers' revised estimates.

To ascertain precisely how many Igbo departed the Bight of Biafra, we therefore need to first calculate the linguistic identity of captives departing Old Calabar and Bonny prior to 1730. Calculating how many Igbo departed the Bight of Biafra in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century is difficult because there is neither precise data on the linguistic identity of shiploads of captives nor testimony of slave traders akin to those for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, the inventories of enslaved people on the Saint Kitts sugar plantations of Robert Cunyngham does enable us to estimate the proportion of Igbo captives departing the Bight of Biafra in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, albeit using a small sample. Cunyngham's lists are extant from 1725 until 1735, and include forty-three Biafran slaves who were born between 1672 and 1709. Assuming that the captives were sold to the coast when they were eighteen years of age, they would have left Biafra sometime between 1690 and 1727. The *TSTD* shows that few slave ships departed Bonny or New Calabar in that period (Table 1.2), and those vessels did not land their captive cargoes at Saint Kitts or any of its neighboring islands. Cunyngham's bondsmen almost certainly left Africa from Old Calabar. The majority of Cunyngham's Biafra slaves were not Igbo: of the forty-three enslaved people recorded in the lists, just sixteen, or thirty-seven percent, were Igbo, and Cunyngham identified the remainder as "Moccows"—a broad designation that encompassed speakers of both Efik and Ibibio. The proportion of Igbo captives departing Old Calabar in the second half of the seventeenth century was almost certainly even lower: perhaps just a quarter. It is difficult to say with certainly how many Igbo left Bonny and New Calabar in same period, but sixty percent is a reasonable approximation, given the strong connections that existed between coastal traders and the Aro in the late seventeenth century.[53] Using these estimates, in addition to Northrup's calculations for

[53] *TSTD,* Principal place of slave purchase: Bonny, New Calabar, or Calabar, 1701-1729. "A List of my Negroes sworn to before John Spooner Esqr by John Rhode my Overseer," St. Christophers, May 1, 1729, CS96/3102,

the late eighteenth century, Chambers' estimates of the number of Igbo exported from the Bight of Biafra can be refined (Table 1.3 & 1.4).

Table 1.2: Enslaved Africans departing principal Biafran ports (thousands), 1651-1808

	Bonny & New Calabar	%	Old Calabar	%	TOTAL
1651-1675	41.1	51%	18.5	44%	59.6
1676-1700	13.8	20%	53.8	64%	67.6
1701-1725	5.9	9%	40.7	79%	46.5
1726-1750	81.8	45%	62.9	41%	144.7
1751-1775	183.5	57%	84.3	32%	267.8
1776-1800	201.3	60%	90.9	25%	292.3
1801-1808	71.4	58%	16.7	19%	88.1
TOTAL	598.7	51%	36.9	31%	966.6

Source: *TSTD*, Estimates, Embarkation: Bight of Biafra, 1651-1808. To obtain the numbers of captives forcibly exported from Bonny, New Calabar and Old Calabar I have used the proportions of captives shipped off from each port according to the voyages section of the *TSTD,* and then multiplied the total number of slave exports according to the estimates section by those proportions.

Table 1.3: Linguistic identity of enslaved Africans (percentages) departing principal Biafran ports, 1651-1808

	Bonny & New Calabar			Old Calabar		
	Igbo	Ibibio & Efik ("Mocco")	Ijo	Igbo	Ibibio & Efik ("Mocco")	"Calabar"
1651-1675	0.60	0.30	0.10	0.25	0.28	0.47
1676-1700	0.60	0.30	0.10	0.33	0.25	0.42
1701-1725	0.74	0.20	0.06	0.37	0.24	0.39
1726-1750	0.74	0.20	0.06	0.60	0.15	0.25
1751-1775	0.74	0.20	0.06	0.60	0.15	0.25
1776-1800	0.74	0.20	0.06	0.60	0.15	0.25
1801-1808	0.74	0.20	0.06	0.60	0.15	0.25

National Records of Scotland; "Inventory and Estimate of the value of my Negroes Stock Mills Coppers Stills and other Plantation Utensils…" St. Christophers, December 25, 1730, CS96/3104, National Records of Scotland, ff. 4–7; "The Schedule or Inventory Continued on the Plantation in Cayon Quarter," St. Christophers, 1742, CS230/C.4/3, National Records of Scotland.

Source: Estimates for the period 1701-1808 are from Northrup, "Myth Igbo," Behrendt et. al. eds. *Diary of Antera Duke.* My own estimates for the period before 1726 are discussed above.

Table 1.4: Linguistic identity of enslaved Africans (thousands) departing principal Biafran ports, 1651-1808

	Igbo		Ibibio & Efik ("Mocco")		"Calabar"		Ijo	
1651-1675	29.3	36%	17.5	22%	8.7	11%	4.1	5%
1676-1700	26.0	38%	17.7	26%	22.5	33%	1.4	2%
1701-1725	19.4	29%	10.8	16%	16.0	24%	0.4	1%
1726-1750	98.3	54%	25.8	14%	15.7	9%	4.9	3%
1751-1775	186.4	58%	49.3	15%	21.1	7%	11.0	3%
1776-1800	203.5	61%	53.9	16%	22.7	7%	12.1	4%
1801-1808	62.8	51%	16.8	14%	4.2	3%	4.3	3%
TOTAL	625.7	53%	191.8	16%	110.9	9%	38.1	3%

***Source*:** The numbers of captives forcibly exported from each port in table 5 has been multiplied by the estimated proportions of captives of different linguistic groups in table 6.

The total number of Igbo exported from the Bight of Biafra was significantly lower than Chambers estimated for the period 1650 to 1808. Chambers computed that one million Igbo speakers left the region, whereas the number was likely around 625,000. The proportion of Igbo forcibly exported was particularly low in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century—the very period when historians have attributed the Igbo a key role in the formation of Chesapeake slave culture. In that period, less than half of the captives departing Biafra were Igbo, because the majority of slave ships departed Old Calabar. After 1726, the proportion of Igbo speakers leaving the Bight of Biafra significantly increased, while the proportions of Ibibio and "Calabars" fell. Through most of the eighteenth century—the peak years of the Biafran slave trade—Igbo speakers accounted for approximately sixty percent of the Africans leaving Biafran ports. At no point did the proportion of Igbo captives reach eighty percent, as Chambers proposed. While large numbers of Igbo were forcibly exported through the trans-Atlantic slave

trade they were not nearly as pre-dominant as historians have suggested, especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[54]

If Igbo speakers were not being sold to the coast in large numbers until the 1730s what, then, was the fate of Igbo people who the Aro purchased before that date? The answer can be found in the history of the Aro. As a small band of ethnically heterogeneous migrants, they sought to expand their population by assimilating slaves into their households, a process known as *Mmuba* or "human proliferation" as Nwokeji has labeled it. The introduction of slaves into Aro households was so common that it was formalized through a ceremony that purged captives of their former connections and linked them to the new. Severed from their friends and family, Aro slaves suffered from isolation, faced discrimination, and performed the most demeaning tasks in society. At the same time, they enjoyed, as Dike and Ekejiuba point out, "immense economic advantages" because Aro masters rewarded the most "intelligent, loyal and hardworking" captives with positions as traders and frequently manumitted their bondsmen. Eventually, some Igbo slaves became free and assimilated Aro, and were able to establish their own households, into which captives entered as new members, repeating the cycle. It was through this process, Dike and Ekejiuba write, that "many layers of new immigrants developed around the original Aro nucleus."[55]

The Aro incorporated large numbers of Igbo captives into their households, initially in an attempt to bolster the small population of original settlers at Arochukwu, and later to rapidly

[54] My lower estimate of the proportion of Igbo speakers tallies closely with census data on the identity of captive Africans in the Americas, taken in 1815-18: 72% of the Biafran born people in Saint Kitts were Igbo; 71% were Igbo in Saint Lucia; and 61% in Berbice. Significantly, all of the slave ships that visited these islands directly had departed from Bonny. Trinidad, by contrast, received less than half of its Biafran captive from Bonny, as a significant number of vessels from Old Calabar, Gaboon and Cameroon disembarked prisoners in the island. There the proportion of captive Igbo was just 52% (B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Mona: University of the West Indies, 1995), pp.442-58).

[55] Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro*, pp.72-80. For the incorporation of slaves by the Aro, see also, Nwokeji, *Slave Trade and Culture,* pp.121-26.

expand their network of colonies and trade routes. According to Nigerian historian Ukwu Ukwu, the Aro's early trading network focused on carrying goods from Arochukwu to the burgeoning colonies to be exchanged for livestock, agricultural produce and slaves. These goods were not typically European luxury goods but items manufactured by artisans in Arochukwu, or obtained by taxes on markets, merchants, and travelers. Even the fairs at Bende and Uburu—later the source of most of the slaves sold at Bonny and New Calabar—were established to facilitate the transfer of tributary slaves from Aro clients to their patrons, rather than to send large numbers of captives to the coast. Every Aro owed two male and two female slaves to his patron every twenty-four days, and the fairs were therefore linked to the same schedule, allowing colonists to return from the Igbo lands and then transfer tributary slaves to their patrons via the fairs. The early phase of Aro expansion was primarily motivated by internal production and demand, not the ambition to become middlemen in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.[56]

As their network grew, the Aro purchased an increasing number of captives who could be profitably sold away to the coast in exchange for trade goods. Even so, the Aro still chose to retain "a good number" of captives who they "incorporated into their household to do their trading and provide domestic services for them," as Dike and Ekejiuba note. Aro traders retained, in particular, men and boys who could be used to expand the slave trade. Aro headmen pulled aside skilled male captives, for example, because they could manufacture valuable goods that could be bartered for captives in the Igbo lands. Adult males could also be employed as porters and guards in caravans. Aro sought young boys, in particular, because they could be trained as trader, and eventually employed purchasing more slaves. They were also easier to assimilate into Aro culture. The diaspora's merchants purchased boys aged around six, and then

[56] Ukwu I. Ukwu, "The Development of Trade and Marketing in Iboland," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 3, no. 4 (1967): 647–62; Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro*, p.98.

put them through a fifteen-year apprenticeship, during which the boy first traded lizards and tortoises—both of which were sacred to the Igbo—and then hawked a variety of goods at markets. As an adult, the apprentice "started the trade in slaves" and wandered the country purchasing captives on behalf of his master. The Aro therefore sought men and boys who could further the slave trade.[57]

The case of Iheme, who was sold to the Aro as a slave in the late seventeenth century, illustrates well how enslaved Igbo boys became Aro merchants. Iheme grew up in Nise, a small Igbo village one hundred and fifty miles to the west of Arochukwu, and was kidnapped and sold by a group of his "friends" to a travelling Aro merchant. The trader kept Iheme and apprenticed him at Arochukwu. Miraculously, Iheme's family later located him and offered to pay for his manumission. Having been assimilated through his apprenticeship Iheme refused to return home, but chose instead to travel to his natal land to obtain slaves: the families of the "friends" who had betrayed and sold him. Iheme's master subsequently sent him out on more slave trading journeys to the populous Nise region. On his fourth journey, Iheme's master accompanied him and decided that the area was so promising that that he permanently settled a trading post that later grew into the largest Aro settlement outside Arochukwu. Iheme himself purchased several slaves who later established their own households and slave trading dynasties. The Aro saw promise in young slave boys such as Iheme, who could be assimilated and used to expand their slave trading network.[58]

Although the Aro did not typically engage in farming, the Igbo must have retained large numbers of adult men because the stream of captives moving to the coast included higher proportions of women than anywhere else on the African coast. Gendered attitudes towards

[57] Dike and Ekejiuba, *Aro*, pp.74-5, 236-37.
[58] Ibid., pp.206-7.

farming likely accounted for this difference, as Nwokeji has ably described. In most African societies, women were responsible for farming crops like millet, corn, rice and plantains, in addition to child rearing and other household duties, whereas men worked as hunters, warriors, merchants and craftsmen. In Igbo society, by contrast, the yam was revered as the "king of crops" and farmed exclusively by men, leaving women a subsidiary role that largely revolved around the planting of less-important "women's crops." When Igbo villagers decided who to sell to the Aro they thus elected to send off more women because they deemed them less useful as agricultural laborers. The Aro likewise took enslaved women either as wives for themselves or their bondsmen; as one Aro elder observed, female slaves "invariably ended as wives." Many of the men who the Aro did send to the fairs worked, like their counterparts on the Gold Coast, harvesting yams prior to their sale: historian of the slave trade Stephen D. Behrendt discovered that slave exports soared at Old Calabar and Bonny during and after the yam harvest, when male agricultural workers become surplus. The slave trade in the Bight of Biafra was thus linked to the agricultural calendar in much the same way as the slave trade on the Gold Coast.[59]

The Aro's preference for retaining male captives is evident in the gender and age structure of 11,064 Biafran prisoners purchased by British captains between 1789 and 1793, when data on the proportion of boys and girls carried by slave ships is available (Table 1.5). Women comprised almost half of the captives sold at Biafran ports in the period, a greater proportion than any other African region. Moreover, the share of boys sold at the coast was significantly lower than the average for other African regions: seven percent, versus twelve

[59] For the use of men in yam farming, see, Nwokeji, *Slave Trade,* pp.144-77. Stephen D.Behrendt, "Ecology, Seasonality, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in Bernard Bailyn ed., *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp.64-8.

percent for other areas. The Aro thus kept numerous men and boys and incorporated them into their society, rather than selling them to the coast.

Table 1.5: Enslaved men, women, boys and girls forcibly exported from the Bight of Biafra, and all other African regions (number), 1789-1793

	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	Total	% Male	% Boys
Bight of Biafra	5,431	3,994	730	909	11,064	56%	7%
Other Regions	10,171	4,946	2,175	1,472	18,764	66%	12%

Source: "An Account of the Number of Vessels, their Tonnage, and Number of Men, that have arrived from Africa in the British West Indian Islands, between the 5th Day of January 1789 and the 5th Day of January 1792; with the Number of SLAVES imported therein…" in Walter Minchinton ed. *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office: A Microfilm Edition with Calendar and Index*. (East Ardsley: Microform Limited, 1983), 1792.6.3/24, fols. 137–39. The *TSTD* does not record the percentage of boys embarked aboard slave ships.

The expansion of the Aro, a process motivated primarily by internal (African) rather than external (Atlantic) impulses, drove the explosion in the number of captives forcibly exported from the Bight of Biafra. The Aro sought, above-all, to expand their wealth and power through the acquisition of followers, enabling a small number of ethnically heterogeneous settlers to increase the size of their households in a pyramidal manner, with the original Aro settler at the apex, and numerous layers of free and unfree clients below. To acquire these followers the Aro initially relied on domestically produced goods that could be traded for slaves. These slaves were then used to establish new colonies and expand the Aro's trading network into the densely populated Igbo lands during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Only when the Aro had established this trading diaspora did they begin to send large numbers of enslaved Igbo-speaking slaves to the coast via Bonny. Even after the Aro connected their network to the coast they still chose to incorporate large numbers of enslaved people into their households—especially young boys and men, who could be employed as traders. Propelled primarily to

acquire slaves as followers, the Aro only secondarily responded to the Europeans' voracious desire to purchase those same slaves.

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Two societies that collectively enslaved and sold the majority of captives entering Britain's trans-Atlantic slave trade provide insights into the African slave trade. African slaveholders sought slaves to incorporate into their households either temporarily or permanently in order to bolster their power and prestige. The decision-making processes of these masters were not the same throughout Africa: Asante slaveholders sought female captives to work their farms, and smaller numbers of men who could be armed and deployed against their enemies, or employed temporarily to perform heavy seasonal labor; Aro masters, by contrast, sought men and boys who could be trained as merchants or otherwise employed to expand the slave trade in the interior. One constant was the link between the slave trade, agriculture, and the seasons. Pre-colonial African societies depended upon subsistence agriculture, and they consequently required large numbers of captives to work during particular times of the year. African slaveholders therefore carefully chose which of their dependents to keep, and which to send to the coast according to the seasons, resulting in noticeable surges in the numbers of prisoners marching to the coast during particular times of the year. The social and political calculations made by slaveholders in an African society were thus key in determining who moved to the coast for sale into the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Conversely, European demand, especially the desire to obtain captives of a particular ethno-linguistic group, did little to shape the identity of the captives moving to the coast. In both regions, African slaveholders sent captives demanded by Europeans to the coast in large numbers at particular moments. On the Gold Coast, Akan speaking slaves made up the vast majority of

captives sold to Europeans prior to the 1740s. In the Bight of Biafra, Igbo speaking slaves dominated slave exports after 1750. Yet in neither region were these movements primarily shaped by European demand. Asante slaveholders retained Akan speakers in their households and sent people to the coast who belonged to diverse cultural groups that Europeans comparatively disliked. The Aro sold thousands of Igbo-speaking slaves to the coast, but not because they deemed Igbo speaking slaves to be in any way less preferable for retention in their households. Rather, they sold Igbo because they predominated in the interior of the Bight of Biafra.

Studying the slave trade on the Gold Coast and the Bight of Biafra also demonstrates that West Africa did not consist of static "cultural zones" that constantly supplied specific trading ports with captives of the same ethnicity. The political map of Africa was extremely fluid during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as ambitious states like Asante and the Aro rapidly expanded their borders, drawing new groups of people into their orbit. The ethnic identity of captives boarding slave ships consequently changed over time. Enslaved people departing the Gold Coast became less homogeneous during the eighteenth century, as Akan-speaking people increasingly were enslaved and sold with people from other language groups. "Coromantee" identity therefore changed from being distinctly Akan to an amalgamation of Akan, Ewe, Ga, Mande and Gur speaking people. Conversely, the number of Igbo boarding slave ships in the Bight of Biafra increased considerably over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. To speak of a singular Igbo identity in places like the Chesapeake during the early eighteenth century is difficult, given that Igbo-speakers likely only constituted a third of the enslaved people then departing Biafra. Instead, the Igbo found themselves trapped aboard ships with Ibibio, Ijo and Efik speaking people, with whom they later worked in the tobacco fields of Virginia and

forged a composite cultural identity. By the late eighteenth century, the Igbo were an increasingly homogenous group, as the Aro sold people from their now well-established trading network to Bonny; but by then, the Chesapeake imported almost no Africans. Captives departing Africa were hence heterogeneous "crowds" at certain times and places, and homogeneous "groups" in others, depending on the particular social and political calculations made by African slaveholders.

Chapter 2- Sale on the African Coast

In July 1774, an enslaved woman and her child boarded a boat on the Gold Coast and began the journey from African to Atlantic slavery. The woman came from the small coastal town of Lagoe and was kidnapped along with her young child by the neighboring Akron, a small Akan-speaking nation. The Akron sold her to Thomas Westgate, the British commander of Winnebah Fort, who locked the woman in the "slave hole," a cramped and leaky dungeon. Three weeks later, Westgate sold the woman and her child along with several other captives to the ship *Juno*, which was anchored at Annamaboe, thirty miles down the coast. As the *Juno's* longboat passed along the coast the woman would have seen her former home at Lagoe and numerous slave ships anchored off shore, with boats and canoes bringing other captives out to them, a familiar sight for someone who had lived by the sea. Even so, her "apprehensions" she felt at being sent to the ships overcame her; she was "in fits" by the time she arrived at the *Juno* and had to be "carried" aboard the vessel. "It is very well known," Westgate told the commander of Annamaboe fort, that enslaved Africans such as the woman "dread[ed]… going on b[oar]d a ship" and the experience had frequently "driven them out of their senses."[60]

The terrifying process by which Europeans purchased enslaved people like the unnamed woman from Lagoe woman has not been the object of concentrated study. Atlantic historians such as Randy Sparks, Marcus Rediker, and Alexander Byrd have all recently written works that focus on the experiences of people during their enslavement in Africa and have seen sale on the coast as a short, but traumatic, process that did little to shape the identity of enslaved people entering the slave trade. Stephanie Smallwood has undertaken a more detailed study and has

[60] Thomas Westgate to Richard Brew, Winnebah, July 10, 1774, CMTA, T70/1536, TNAUK. The woman would have also encountered whites in Lagoe itself, as several traders were resident in the town. See, Richard Miles to David Mill, Tantumquerry, August 11, 1773, CMTA, T70/1479/6, TNAUK. For the Akron, see, Robin Law and British Academy, *The English in West Africa, 1685-1688: The Local Correspondence of the Royal African Company of England 1681-1699* (London: British Academy, 2001) II, p.192-93, n.53.

described how seventeenth-century slave traders on the Gold Coast turned "African Captives into Atlantic Commodities." People who arrived from the interior "sick or healthy, young or old, injured or strong," were, Smallwood contends, "equally suitable for exchange on the Atlantic market" because Europeans reduced them to the status of a single commodity: an "African slave." Captives who "visibly ran the gamut in age and physical condition" became "uniformly" saleable as "likely" or "lusty" workers. In a recent study of Britain's slave trade along the African coast in the late eighteenth century, Audra Diptee agrees with Smallwood, even though she looked at a much later period and a number of different trading locations on the coast of Africa. European ship captains needed to depart the African coast quickly and so they were "flexible with their purchasing criteria," she writes, buying anyone that was presented to them, including the old, young, and sickly.[61]

Recent scholarship on trading relations between Europeans and Africans has indirectly buttressed this position by emphasizing the agency of powerful African middlemen who controlled the slave trade on the African coast. As John Thornton has argued, Europeans could do little to compel Africans to trade with them, given their lack of military power and the constant risk of death and disease in the tropics. Moreover, African statesmen imposed expensive port-dues and taxes on European ships and they embargoed visitors who refused to comply. Neither could Europeans foist cheap and shoddy goods onto gullible Africans in exchange for slaves, as historians such as Walter Rodney had previously suggested. Africans demanded specific assortments of goods, many of them luxury items acquired from around the globe, in exchange for slaves; Europeans had to accommodate the exacting and frequently shifting tastes of discriminating Africans brokers. Moreover, captains traded for slaves using African currencies

[61] Sparks, *Where the Negroes*, pp.139-61. Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers,* pp.27-31, Rediker, *Slave Ship*, pp.108-19. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, p.51. Diptee, *From Africa,* pp.50-72.

and barter systems; on the African coast, as one British fort officer observed, "the Negroes are masters." Historians have hence found that the actual process of sale on the African coast had little bearing on who ultimately entered the trans-Atlantic slave trade, because Europeans typically purchased whoever was offered to them by powerful African middlemen.[62]

This chapter describes how Europeans purchased enslaved people on the coast of Africa, with a particular focus on the British slaving forts on the Gold Coast, and Bonny, the principal slaving port in the Bight of Biafra. It first details the process by which fort officers and ship captains bartered for enslaved people on the Gold Coast drawing primarily on the exceptionally detailed papers of British fort officer Richard Miles. Europeans commoditized captives, albeit not in the way that Smallwood hypothesized. Slave ship captains carefully inspected slaves and ruthlessly rejected any who did not meet strict standards of age and health, especially young children, the elderly, and the sickly. The second section explores the purchasing patterns of slave ship captains at Bonny during the eighteenth century. Captains at Bonny also strove to purchase healthy slaves but they employed clear strategies to manage competition from other ships and the constant risk of mortality or insurrection. They embarked low-priced children and young adults soon after a ship arrived on the coast and then purchased higher-priced adults—especially men—immediately prior to their departure from the coast. Stringent European demand for enslaved Africans who met particular criteria of age and health thus shaped both who entered Atlantic slavery and the period of time that those Africans spent aboard the ships.

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[62] Thornton, *Africa and Africans,* pp.43-71. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington D.C: Howard University Press, 1974), p.102. For the power of West African consumers and their demand for particular trade goods, see, David Richardson, "West African Consumption Patterns and Their Influence on the Eighteenth-Century English Slave Trade," in *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, ed. A. Gemery and J. Hogendorn (New York: Academic Press, 1979), pp.303–30; Stanley B. Alpern, "What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods," *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 5–43. Quoted in Sparks, *Where the Negroes*.

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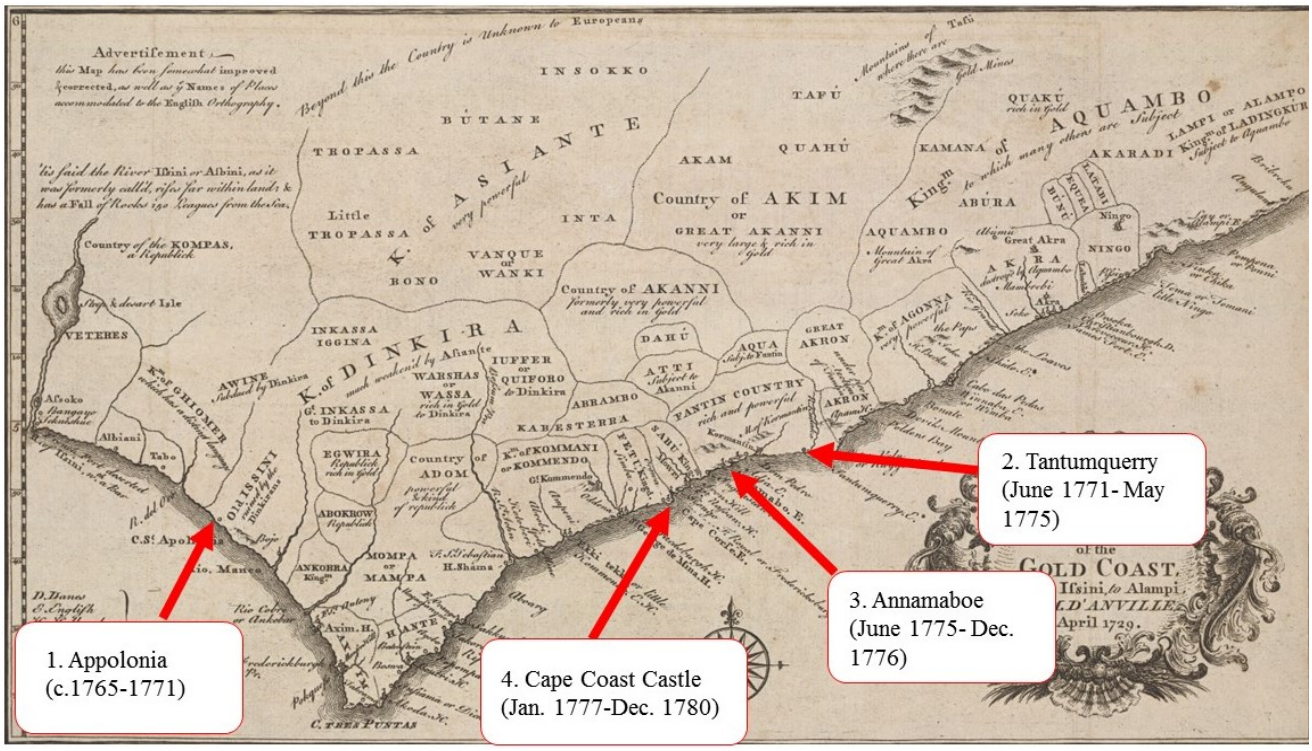
Spotlighting Richard Miles, one of the largest slave traders on the eighteenth-century Gold Coast reveals the slave purchasing strategies employed by fort-based Europeans in Africa. In 1765, Miles joined the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, a non-monopoly holding company that managed Britain's slaving forts, and arrived on the coast as a penniless teenager. He quickly ascended the ranks and obtained the command of a string of forts. He began his career at Cape Apollonia, a relatively peripheral fort where slave ships typically put in to obtain ivory and gold dust and, in 1771, was promoted to the governorship of Tantumquerry, a small slave-trading fort further along the Gold Coast. From June 1775 until December 1776, Miles served as the governor of Annamaboe, the locus of the slave trade on the Gold Coast. He then became the principal British officer in Africa, having obtained the command of Cape Coast Castle, a position he held until March 1780, when he was recalled to Britain on corruption charges (Figure 2.1). As a fort-based trader, Miles bought enslaved Africans from African traders, which he then sold to European ship captains at a profit. Miles's confiscated papers include a series of ledgers that record his purchase of 2,461 men, women and children between 1771 and 1781—the largest and most complete record of a British merchant's slave purchases on the African coast.[63]

[63] For Miles' background, see, Metcalf, "Gold, Assortments," 27–41. Miles' papers are extensive and are scattered through the T70 series of papers at TNAUK. The ledgers are in CMTA, T70/1488, T70/1264, T70/1265, TNAUK. Miles' brother Thomas also served as an officer in the CMTAs' service in the 1780s and 90s and his papers are likewise preserved in the T70 series. For Miles' family, see, Silke Strickrodt and Thomas Miles, "A Neglected Source for the History of Little Popo: The Thomas Miles Papers Ca. 1789-1796," *History in Africa* 28 (2001): 293–330. For the CMTA and its agents, see, William St Clair, *The Door of No Return: The History of Cape Coast Castle and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Blue Bridge, 2009).

Figure 2.1: The Gold Coast with Richard Miles' postings, c.1765-1780



Source: "A Map of the Gold Coast from Isini to Alampi, by M. D'Anville. April 1729," in Thomas Astley ed., *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1745-47 II, plate 60 pp. 564-565.

The majority of enslaved people whom Richard Miles purchased marched down from Asante for 125-150 miles along one of four "great roads" that fanned out from Kumasi and led to the coast. Enslaved people sent to the forts that Miles commanded took a route that led south to Annamaboe, a ten-day journey that crossed rolling hills, dense forests, and numerous streams and rivers. Asante travelers divided the road into portions, called *kwansin,* each of which was supposed to constitute a single day's march with an established resting post at its end. Although each *kwansin* was theoretically equidistant, the length of each daily journey varied enormously depending on the terrain and the weather. On some days, captives marched for nine hours on flat roads through villages and farms; on others they spent just two hours in a "labyrinth" of paths that wound through dense forest overrun with tree roots and fallen trunks that could only be

passed by "scaling them," as one later British traveler described. After journeying for eight days, the coffle reached Assin Manso, the great "market for slaves from the Interior," which sat astride the "slave river" (*ndonko nsuo*). Fante slave brokers, who inhabited the lands around the British forts, travelled to Assin Manso to purchase slaves, who had a final opportunity to wash in the river before making the two-day journey to the coast.[64]

After visiting slave markets in the interior, Fante dealers marched their prisoners to the forts closest to their own homes where they were acquainted with middlemen known as gold-takers. At Tantumquerry Fort, Miles purchased captives from 192 different dealers, most of whom lived in the adjacent town of Tantumquerry, or in the nearby villages of Aggumacon, Braffoe, Isea and Incoom, which were directly north of the fort along the trading path. When Miles transferred to Annamaboe, he dealt with an almost entirely different set of traders, most of whom resided next to the fort or in the "bush," presumably in hamlets along the trading paths north of the forts. At Cape Coast Castle, Miles again acquainted himself with yet another set of traders, despite his latest posting only being fifteen miles down the coast from Annamaboe. Although Fante merchants were generally attached to their home locale, some did re-direct small numbers of slaves to nearby forts on the coast. African historian George Metcalf, who examined Miles' ledgers to identify the Fante brokers, found that twenty percent of Miles' barters at Cape Coast Castle were with sellers he knew from his previous posting at Annamaboe. Fante

[64] When a traveler walked the road to Kumasi in the nineteenth century he spent nine hours completing one *kwansin* of eighteen miles and, the next day, just three hours to cover five miles (Wilks, *Asante*, p.9). Bowdich, *Mission*, pp.19-20. For Assin Manso, see also, Shumway, *Fante*, pp.108-9. Captives destined for the forts at the eastern end of the Gold Coast were marched to the banks of the River Volta along another of the great roads, and then taken via canoe to the coast.

merchants marched Africans down to different areas of the coast depending on their connections to European traders and the location of their own homes.[65]

Fante traders typically sold slaves to Europeans individually, or in small groups. At Tantumquerry and Cape Coast Castle, almost half of the captives that Miles bought were solitaries, and over two-thirds were accompanied by just one other prisoner; Miles did not buy any captive at either fort in a group larger than seven people (Table 2.1). At Annamaboe, captives arrived in slightly larger groups, probably because of the fort's size and importance. Even so, Miles still bought two-thirds of the slaves in groups of less than four people, and almost a third as individuals. Captives brought to the slave market together therefore had little chance of staying with family or friends as they were apt to be taken by the Fante to numerous places on the coast, and then sold to Europeans in small groups.

Table 2.1: Enslaved Africans purchased per transaction by Richard Miles at three different slaving forts (number), 1771-1780

Number of People Purchased	Tantumquerry	%	Annamaboe	%	Cape Coast Castle	%	TOTAL	%
1	523	46%	265	32%	172	46%	960	41%
2-3	428	38%	302	36%	164	44%	894	38%
4-5	146	13%	145	18%	30	8%	321	14%
6-7	40	4%	63	8%	0	0%	103	4%
8-9	0	0%	34	4%	0	0%	34	0%
10+	0	0%	21	3%	0	0%	32	0%
	1,137		830		366		2,344	

[65] Miles occasionally recorded the residence of the traders from whom he purchased slaves by writing, for example, "of Isea" after their names in his ledger. George Metcalf identified the locations of the three principal traders from whom Miles purchased slaves at Tantumquerry, Annamaboe and Cape Coast Castle (Metcalf, "Gold, Assortments," p.29). The Fante diverted captives along a long road that ran along the coast. In June 1774, for example, the governor of Winnebah fort complained that the Fante brought "Numbers of slaves" to him every day, but were "going to Tantum[querry]"—fifteen miles to the west—because he did not have the goods to pay for them (Thomas Westgate to Richard Brew, Winnebah, March 3, 1774, CMTA, T70/1536, TNAUK). For Brew and his descendants, see Margaret Priestley, *West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). Miles purchased eleven captives from "old Tantumkweri associates" at Cape Coast Castle, but this only equated to about two percent of his trade.

Sources: Slave Barters by R.Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK; , Slave barters by R. Miles at Annamaboe…, 1776-1777, CMTA, T70/1265, TNAUK; R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book., 1771-1772, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK. It was not possible to determine the lot size of 117 people who Miles purchased because his notations in his ledger were not sufficiently detailed.

Marching to the coast was an exhausting experience for people who had already trekked to Kumasi, and there toiled as a slave, or trudged for hundreds miles through the interior carrying heavy loads. Potentially rebellious male slaves had their wrists "fastened to a log of twenty-five or thirty pounds weight" of three to four feet in length to "prevent them from running away," as Miles told Parliament. Women and children were not shackled, as the slave traders were "under no apprehension of their running away," but did have a "Man before, and a Man behind" to prevent elopement. Unshackled captives still had to carry heavy loads both to provide transportation for foodstuffs, equipment, and trade goods, and also to reduce the likelihood of resistance or rebellion.[66] Enslaved people also carried trade goods to the coast: ivory tusks, some weighing fifty-pounds or more, were transported to the coast "upon the shoulders of the Slaves" Miles related. Captives drawn from deep in the interior arrived particularly exhausted and emaciated after their long journey. Gur-speaking people, who were enslaved almost three hundred miles from the sea, were, according to a British captain, "very meagre in consequence of the fatigue experienced by them in their long journey from the interior."[67] Captives had little time to recuperate before their sale. According to John Fountain, who served as a fort officer

[66] For the shackling of captives marching to the coast, see, Testimony of Richard Miles in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 68, p.58; Testimony of John Fountain in Ibid., p.196; Testimony of Jerome Bernard Weuves in *Report of the Lords,* p.42). Romer wrote that women and children had their "right arm" tied "to their waist" (Romer, *Reliable Account*, p.225).

[67] Testimony of Richard Miles in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.44. Fountain saw a gargantuan tusk of 170lb that had been sawed into pieces, and dragged down to the coast using ropes, presumably by slaves (Testimony of John Fountain, in Ibid., pp.173-4). For the transportation of heavy weights by captives, see also, Testimony of William Littleton in Ibid., p.210). Romer wrote that the Africans "saw the large tusks in two, or at times into three pieces," each of which was carried on a pole by two men. Romer weighed three pieces that had formed a single tusk and found that it weighed 180lbs, implying that two captives had to haul a sixty pound piece between them (Romer, *Reliable Account,* pp.227-28). Phillip Curtin found that male captives marching to Senegambia were made to carry fifty-five pounds of goods and foodstuffs, and women thirty-three pounds (Phillip Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa; Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), p.172-3). Adams, *Sketches*, pp.9-10.

alongside Miles, the Fante offered people for sale to Europeans on the day of their arrival on the coast, or "the following," because they were, Miles stated, "not only at the expence of feeding them, but there is also the risk of mortality." Slaves arrived on the coast in "very poor in flesh," and had "Sores from travelling through the Woods," according to Miles and Fountain.[68]

Miles subjected every African he considered purchasing to a humiliating bodily inspection, usually conducted by a medical practitioner, to sift people according their health and age. In a 1769 guide for slave traders, Pieter Gallandat, a Dutch slave ship surgeon, described how to perform an inspection. The surgeon first measured the slave using a stick accurate to half an inch. He then pried open the person's mouth, and looked for decay or missing teeth that might indicate old age. He also poured water over the person's head, and rubbed it to search for dyed grey hairs, while peering closely at the person's skin, looking for wrinkles. The surgeon gauged the captive's sensory capacities, whether eyesight, speech, or hearing. He "carefully examine[d] the entire body," paying particular attention to feet and hands, since missing toes or fingers would hamper field labor. A captive's genitals came under scrutiny for evidence of venereal disease; according to slave trader Willem Bosman in 1707, enslaved people were "thoroughly examined, even to the smallest Member, and that naked too both Men and Women, without the least distinction of Modesty." Made to jump and flex limbs, a captive had to have "no wounds, fractures, stiff limbs, hidden ailments, or any injuries," Gallandat wrote, and no indications of "fevers, chest maladies, jaundice, scurvy" or liver disease. According to two separate witnesses, Europeans also licked the faces of enslaved males, both to test for the faint traces of beard,

[68] Testimony of John Fountain in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.165, 173-74; Testimony of Richard Miles in Ibid., p.52; Testimony of Richard Miles in *Report of the Lords,* p.40.

indicating age, and to taste the sweat for indications of illness (Figure 2.2). Apparently, inspections were invasive and intimate.[69]

Figure 2.2: "Slave Market" (*Marche d'esclaves),* 1783

***Source**:* Chambon, *Traité Général* II, pp.400-401. Caption: "A black slave being examined before his purchase" "Englishman licking the chin of the black to assure himself of his age, & ensure by the taste of the sweat that he is not ill" (translation my own).

[69] Pieter Gallandat, *Necessary Instructions for the Slave Traders* (Middelburg, 1769), Lieneke Timpers trans. Thomas Phillips, who bought slaves at Whydah in 1694, wrote that the surgeons "examin'd them well in all kinds… looking in ther mouths to judge of their age… 'tis no easy matter to know an old one from a middle-age one, but by the teeths decay" (Thomas Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693, 1694,…* (Walthoe, 1732), p.218). Thomas Aubrey, a ship-surgeon who served on several slave ships in the Bight of Biafra during the 1720s, advised other surgeons that it was "absolutely necessary that you visit all the Slaves, before you suffer them to be bought." He also described a long list of diseases that manifested themselves both on and inside the genitals of enslaved people (Thomas Aubrey, *The Sea-Surgeon, Or the Guinea Man's Vade Mecum* (London, 1729), p.118). Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*, Reissue edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.364. Thomas Phillips also wrote that the surgeons "examine the privities of both men and women… which is a great slavery" (Phillips, *Journal,* p.218). Romer said that Portuguese captains "sniffs down the slaves' throats, and feels them everywhere. A slave must perform antics for him, laugh and sing for him. Finally he licks them with his tongue around their chins to discover if they have beards." (Romer, *Reliable Account,* p.226). Mr. Chambon, *Traité générale du commerce de l'Amérique...* (Amsterdam, 1783), II, pp.400-01.

At the conclusion of the inspection—which could last up to four hours according to Romer—Miles offered a price for the captive. He first separated males from females, and then sorted people into six age categories: men, women, men-boys, women-girls, boys, and girls. Given that Miles could not determine a person's precise age, he, like other European traders on the coast, used height as a measure of age. He grouped together men aged between eighteen and thirty five, anyone over the height of four feet four. They were supposed to be in good health, with "no blemishes at all," as Paul Isert, a Danish visitor to the Gold Coast put it in 1786; they could be labeled "prime adult men." Any person who fit this criteria was assigned a fixed price in gold ounces and ackies (the currency on the Gold Coast, which was sixteen ackies to an ounce), a yardstick to appraise other enslaved people. Healthy enslaved women aged between sixteen and thirty-five, and over the height of four feet, consistently fetched two ounces of gold less than prime men. Fante brokers and Europeans knew in advance, as Romer noted, "at which price each Black is valued" and so, as Isert told his readers, barters proceeded for slaves "without any further discussion" over prices.[70]

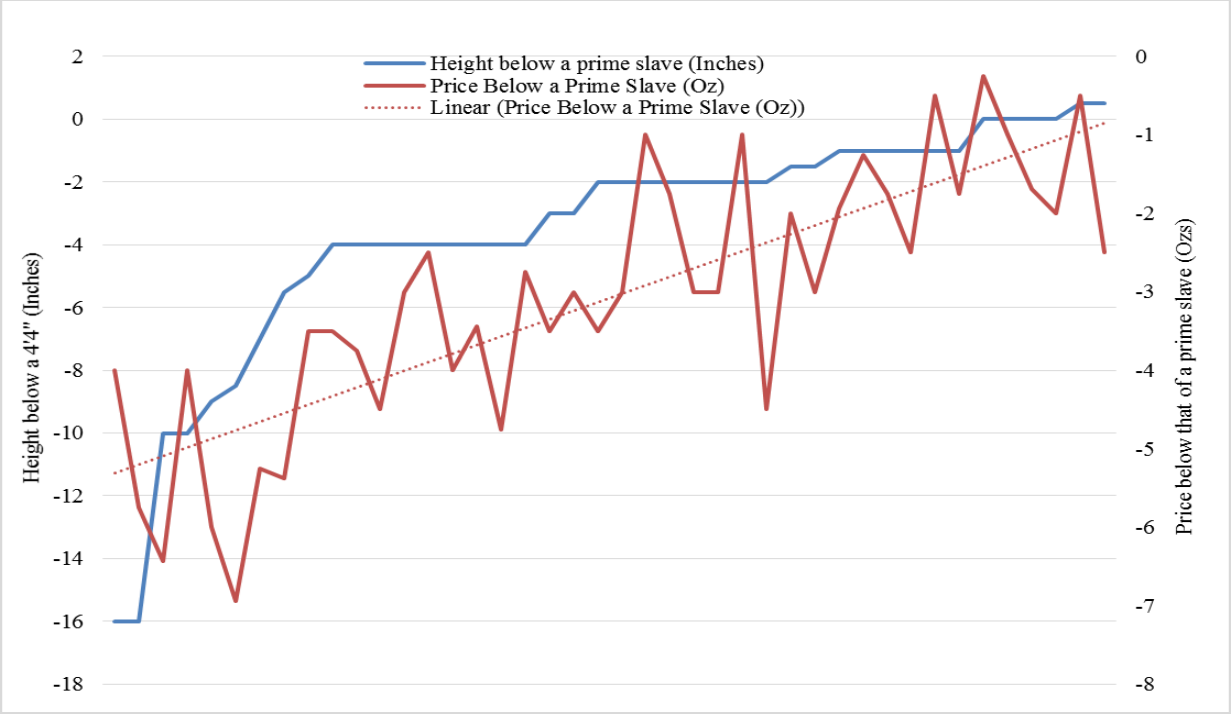
Miles made other adjustments for age and health. Miles always paid less for children than adults, particularly for children below three feet ten inches (Figure 2.3). The variability in prices for enslaved children of the same height indicates that he also made assumptions about a person's age that were not based strictly on stature. Despite the low prices that Miles negotiated for extremely young children, in general he appears to have avoided purchasing them: thirty-five of the forty-two enslaved children he bought at Tantumquerry were taller than three feet ten.

[70] From June 1771, Miles invariably purchased men for eight ounces and fifteen ackies, and women for six ounces and fifteen ackies. After February 1772, the Fante increased the prices to nine ounces and fifteen ackies for men, and seven ounces and fifteen ackies for women, a level they continued at until November 1777, when the prices dropped by two ounces per person. For the reduction in the price of slaves, see, Captain John Muir to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, November 2, 1777, CMTA, T70/1479/2, TNAUK. Romer, *Reliable Account,* p.225; Winsnes, ed., *Letters,* p.84.

Miles sought adolescents over the age of eight to ten years. When inspecting adults, he deducted for what a contemporary termed "small defects" that made a captive "objectionable as a prime Slave." In 1773, he bought a small number of middle-aged or elderly captives for low prices, such as "an old man" for whom he paid six ounces and seven ackies and "an Old Woman" for just three ounces and fifteen ackies. He also offered reduced prices for captives with impairments, such as eight ounces and seven ackies for a man who was "want[in]g a finger," eight ackies less than a healthy male captive bought on the same day. He likewise paid an ounce less for a woman lacking three teeth. He lowered his bids for slaves he deemed "ordinary," or "indifferent." Yet aged and sickly slaves were exceptions in Miles' purchasing pattern, because he almost always bought healthy Africans. At Tantumquerry and Annamaboe, for example, Miles paid fixed prices for 1,714 of the 1,776 enslaved adults, ninety-seven percent of the total.[71]

[71] Testimony of John Fountain in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.195. R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book., 1771-1772, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK; Slave Barters by R. Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK. This system of pricing slaves appears to have been prevalent along the Gold Coast. For "one tooth missing," Isert wrote, "2 thalers will be deducted." "Sores on the legs… and greater defects such as the lack of one eye or of fingers," he went on, "results in greater discount" from the price of a prime slave (Winsnes, ed., *Letters,* p.84).

Figure 2.3: Prices paid by Richard Miles for forty-two enslaved boys and girls and their heights, Tantumquerry, 1773-1774



Source: R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK; Slave Barters by R.Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK. Miles paid 9 ounces and 15 ackies for adult men and 7 ounces and 15 ackies for women throughout this period.

Ethnicity had little bearing on Miles' decision-making. During his residence at Tantumquerry, Miles noted in his ledger when he purchased Akan-speaking Fante people—who would later be marketed as the "Coromantees" preferred by American planters—but he did not pay a premium for them. He also ceased to note his purchase of Fante people after his departure from Tantumquerry, implying that ethnicity mattered even less at Annamaboe. For the rest of his time on the coast he failed to note the ethnicity of any of his purchases and never paid higher prices to secure particular groups of slaves. Miles' lack of attention toward the ethno-linguistic background of the captives is especially notable because he, above most European visitors to the African coast, was well qualified to distinguish between African groups. During his long residency on the coast of Africa Miles learned Fante and he could hence distinguish between

Akan and non-speakers. Age and health were the key criteria by which Richard Miles selected slaves, not ethnicity.[72]

Miles bought enslaved Africans using a system known as assortment bargaining in which enslaved people and European trade goods were each assigned prices in ounces and ackies. Europeans could not simply exchange a quantity of money—such as gold or silver—for enslaved people and had instead to give a bundle of different goods that collectively comprised an equivalent to a slave. Coastal brokers assigned every good a price in ounces when it was first introduced by Europeans, which almost never changed within or between individual barters. For pre-literate people such as the Fante, keeping the prices of goods steady was essential or the system would break down into chaos as brokers and Europeans would endlessly haggle over prices. Brokers on the Gold Coast knew, according to Isert, "the price of the wares exactly" before they bartered for slaves.[73]

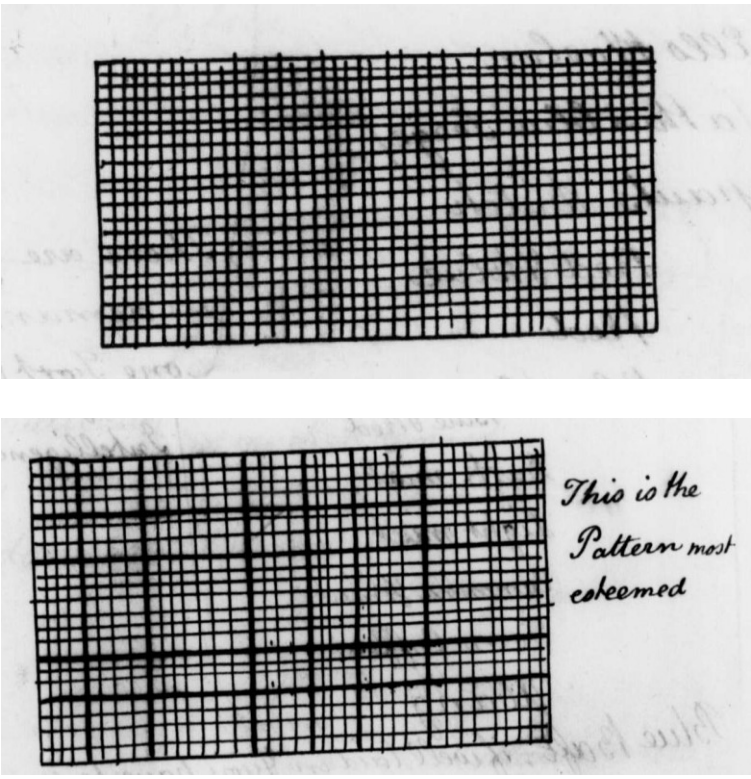
Because the prices of goods were relatively static over long periods of time the goods themselves had to meet fixed standards of quality and quantity in order to be suitable in trade. When European merchants prepared a slave ship's cargo they cut textiles into specific yardages; stringed beads into bunches; sorted hats and knives into dozens; and measured out gunpowder and liquor into thousands of identical kegs. Cloth cut to the correct length still had to be of the desired color and pattern. "The blue colour which we add to the cloth," Romer advised his

[72] For Miles' proficiency in the Fante language, see, *Report of the Lords,* p.41.

[73] The unit of account varied in different regions of the coast: in Senegambia, Senegal and the Windward Coast, the trading unit was the iron bar; on the Gold Coast, ounces and ackies of gold; in the Bight of Benin, the cowry shell; at Bonny and New Calabar, the iron bar; at Old Calabar, the copper rod; and in Angola, a piece of cloth. For the gold ounce and the assortment system, see, Karl Polanyi, "Sortings and 'Ounce Trade' in the West African Slave Trade," *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 3 (1964), pp.381–93; Marion Johnson, "The Ounce in Eighteenth-Century West African Trade," *The Journal of African History* 7, no. 2 (1966), pp.197–214; Metcalf, "Gold, Assortments," pp.27–41. Winsnes, ed., *Letters,* p.85. As Johnson describes, the prices of certain goods did change over time, especially in response to an influx of a particular item, but these shifts were gradual and did not typically impact on barters conducted on a day-to-day basis. For a particularly adroit analysis of the assortment bargaining system and the prices of goods on the African coast, see, Curtin, *Economic Change*.

readers, “must not only be true but also dark blue,” because the Africans “do not like light blue at all.” The “red, green, and yellow” colored cloth also had to be “true,” Romer continued, because “the Blacks test it with citron juice.” A later visitor to the Gold Coast warned his readers that Manchester-produced imitations of Indian textiles would not pass in trade, and sketched two almost identical patterns of bejutapant (an Indian textile) one of which was “most esteemed” by the brokers (Figure 2.4). Gunpowder needed to contain more coal than usual and “less sulphare and saltpeter,” Romer said, to make it “desirable among the Blacks in Africa.” Africans summarily rejected any item that did not meet their exacting standards. Conversely, a good of exceptional quality was equally acceptable in trade—and priced the same—as a lesser item that still met Fante standards.[74]

Figure 2.4: Patterns of Bejutapant traded on the Gold Coast, c.1793



[74] Romer, *Reliable Account,* p.229.

***Source**: "*Mr Parfitts Information respecting Trade between Sierra Leone & Cape Lopez, including the Islands St Thomas &c," Add.Mss.12131, British Library, f.44.

Miles and the Fante broker therefore knew the prices of goods and slaves and so the actual process of bartering for a person consisted of a debate over the exact composition of the trading assortment. Miles did not describe in his letters, accounts, or testimony before Parliament how he conducted a barter, but evidence from other European visitors to Africa show that it was a well-regulated process. Paul Isert saw Gold Coast brokers state which items they wanted in the assortment and then set down "as many [cowry] shells as the individual piece cost." After "hours" of "pick[ing] and chos[ing]," Isert continued, the captain and the broker agreed on the composition of the assortment.[75] "[T]he Goods are then shewn to the Broker, and the person who wants to sell them the Slave," John Fountain testified, "and if there is any piece of Goods objectionable, or that he wishes to change he is at liberty to do so." After handing over the bundle of goods, Miles marked the completion of the barter by giving the broker a number of

[75] Isert, *Letters,* pp.84-85. Nathaniel Cutting, an American slave trader described in detail how such barters worked. In 1790 Cutting witnessed Captain John Knox, of the slave ship *Hercules,* and King Robin Gray, an African trader at Cape Mount, on the Windward Coast, barter for a slave. The price of the goods and the slave had been "previously agreed on." Knox gave Gray a number of cowry shells equal to the price of the slave in bars (the currency on the Windward Coast), and Gray then "mention[ed] the article which he wants & lays down then a number of Cowries equal to the number of Bars at which it is currently sold." If Knox agreed to include the item in the assortment, he wrote "down the articles" on a slate, "affixing against it the number of Bars." When that round of bartering had been completed, an "assistant" cleared the cowries and Gray proceeded to name the next article he desired until "the whole number of Cowries are returned" to Knox. Once the composition of the assortment had been agreed, Knox's mate took the slate to the ship's hold and drew out the listed goods, which he gave to Gray (Nathaniel Cutting Journal and Letterbooks, 1786–98, January 7, 1790, Massachusetts Historical Society). For a similar descriptions of the system of barter on the Windward Coast, see Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London, 1807), p.58. E.L. Parfitt, who traded along the Windward and Gold Coasts in the 1790s, advised captains to bring "two large slates with pencils," presumably to note the assortment during barters. Degrandpre, a French captain who traded on the Loango coast in the 1780s, also described a similar process: "The captain writes the packet on an slate; he is withdrawn in his chamber with his courtier, disputing and composing his packet, in a fashion that one and the other are content; and when they are in accord, the courtier carries the slate to the first lieutenant; he pays" (Louis-Marie-Joseph Ohier Grandpré, *Voyage À La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique…* (Paris, 1801), II, p.60).

gratis items—known as dashes—usually knives, tobacco, and liquor. Miles then took possession of the purchased African.[76]

Europeans thus tried to select people who were of a particular age range and in a good state of health—their "quality," to employ the dehumanizing logic of the trade. Miles examined large groups of enslaved people arriving from the interior and carefully picked out smaller numbers of healthy adults and adolescents. Europeans treated enslaved Africans as commodities that could be carefully inspected and assigned a fixed price. Once commodified, enslaved Africans could be exchanged for goods that also had to meet particular standards of quality. But the process was bilateral, not unilineal. As one French visitor to the African coast adroitly noticed, "if the Europeans are exact in inspecting their captives, [the Africans] are as well in inspecting the merchandize."[77]

Miles imprisoned the Africans he purchased in the dilapidated and leaky dungeons of the forts under his command. At Tantumquerry, he conveyed the Africans up a small set of stairs that led to the front gate of the fort. It opened at the tip of a triangular walled courtyard where sheep and goats grazed, at the base of which was the entry to the fort itself (Figure 2.5). After passing through an interior entry hall to another courtyard, Miles' assistants would have pushed the captives into the "slave hole," a room measuring fifteen feet square, with no division between

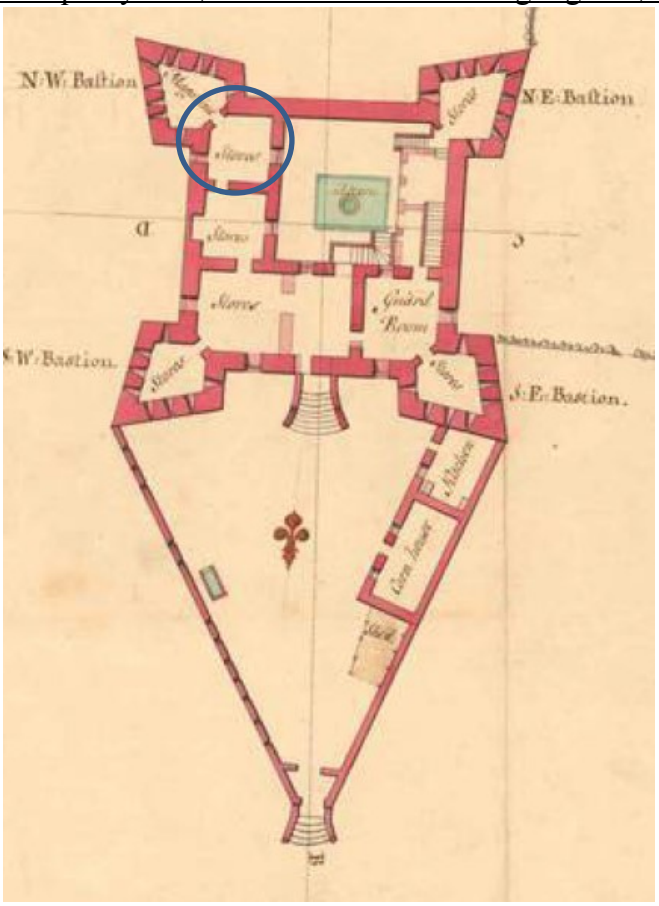
[76] Testimony of John Fountain in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.165. Captain Heatley, who traded for slaves at the Senegambia in the 1770s, gives the best explanation of the importance of dashes for marking the sale of a slave: "The Slave Owner having received his Goods as agreed on, he calls for Courit a Curt (which siginifies, in the English Language, loosing the Slaves from their Rope) and is done by presenting him Trading Knives, Half a Bar of Tobacco, Paper & c.; without this, his Deed of Delivery is not perfect" (Testimony of Captain Heatley in *Report of the Lords,* p.29). Parfitt advised visitors to the coast to give away the dashes with an "air of liberality," so that the brokers would "like" the captain better ("Parfitts Information…" BL, Add Mss 12131, p.12). The brokers would then, another visitor to the coast opined, "march off singing [the] praises" of the captain, and communicate his virtues to other traders who they "meet on the road," encouraging them to bring more slaves to the captain (Corry, *Observations,* p.59)

[77] Grandpré, *Voyage à La Côte Occidentale,* II, p.61. The same captain described how African brokers inspected cloth: "they spread them all out in the court, they hold them between themselves and the light, and if they perceive there a little hole or a tear [retissue], they must change it."

men and women, and, presumably, minimal sanitation. In Miles' time, Tantumquerry fort was in a tumbledown state: the bastion opposite the slave hole had collapsed to the ground, and timbers held up "every roof and floor in the fort" "to prevent their falling in." Although Annamaboe was a much larger and more recently constructed fort, its prison was still fetid and cramped: it measured just thirty feet by fifteen, and an inspector described the fort in 1777—shortly after Miles' tenure there—as being "in a rotten ruinous condition." During the rainy months, water seeped into the rooms through the poorly maintained roof and so there was not "not one dry room in the fort." Cape Coast Castle was in no better repair. In July 1771, the Governor of the fort told Miles that the tops of the outer walls had "fallen down and the remainder will certainly follow it; to say nothing of the office, Hall & every place which leaks."[78]

[78] "State and Condition of Tantumquerry Fort February 1773" in Minchinton ed. *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*, 1774.3.8. "State and Condition of Annamaboe Fort this 6th June 1777" in Ibid., 1778.2.6. David Mill to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, July 7, 1771, CMTA, T70/1531, TNAUK. The other out forts were in equally poor repair. In January 1775, the commander of Secondee wrote a letter from what he described as the "ruins" of the fort, where four captives were nonetheless imprisoned (Martin Watts to Richard Miles, Secondee Ruins, January 4, 1775, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK). The governor of Winnebah fort told Richard Brew that his own fort was "in a more ruinous state with regard to floors, doors windows & c & c" and that his powder magazine, which was full, was open to the elements, risking an explosion (Thomas Westgate to Richard Brew, Winnebah, June 25, 1773, CMTA, T70/1536, TNAUK).

Figure 2.5: Plan of Tantumquerry Fort, with the "slave hole" highlighted, c.1756



Source: "Ground Plan of Tantumquerry Fort. Africa. As surveyed in February 1756 by Justly Wilson Director of Engineers," MPG/1/230, TNAUK.

Miles collected captives in the forts and then shipped them off together, usually in groups of between six and ten people; he seldom sold individuals (Table 2.2). Captives who arrived at the fort after Miles had recently dispatched a large group of slaves entered an empty or near-empty prison. Over the course of the next week or two, Miles put more Africans into the increasingly crowded dungeon; people who arrived to complete the group spent a relatively short time in the prison. On April 28, 1775, for example, Miles only had "a single slave now in the Fort" because he had recently sold twenty-one slaves to the ship *Mill.* In May 1774, Miles told another captain that he had "not any slaves by me at present to send you," presumably because he had sent off seventeen captives five days earlier. He added, nonetheless, that he "hope[d] in a

few days to be able to get some." Earlier in the same year, he told a captain that he had "about 20" slaves in the dungeons at Tantumquerry, who he could ship along with "a few more shortly." While it is difficult to ascertain the exact time that captives spent trapped in the castles, Africans appear to have rarely spent more than two weeks in the prison, and some may have been trapped there for only a few days.[79]

Table 2.2: Groups of enslaved Africans shipped off from Tantumquerry Fort by Richard Miles, December 1772-May 1775

	1	2-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	>21	TOTAL
Number of Groups	48	64	51	14	8	5	**190**
Number of People	48	199	403	178	146	137	**1,111**
	4%	18%	36%	16%	13%	12%	

***Source**:* R. Miles: Tantumquerry, Annamaboe, and Cape Coast Castle; rough day-book, 1772-1778, CMTA, T70/1489, TNAUK. Miles' papers did not record the destination of sixty-seven of the 1,178 captives who Miles purchased at Tantumquerry, possibly because he kept them as slaves himself, or returned them to the Fante.

Miles transported captives off shore in canoes and boats of varying sizes. Groups of up to seven captives were paddled off in a "seven hand canoe" that belonged to the fort, crewed by seven Fantee canoe men. Larger groups of prisoners were taken in an eleven or fourteen hand canoe, or in the slave ship's longboat. The number of crew usually matched the number of captives, making it difficult for them to rebel or dive over the side. The journey off the beach was terrifying for the Africans, especially those from inland, land-locked countries, because the surf was frequently rough and could topple a flimsy canoe, dumping the slaves into the sea. In April 1774, for example, Miles told a captain that he had tried to get a group of ten captives off the beach but failed because the "canoe was upset with the slaves in her." One of the male

[79] Richard Miles to Captain Joseph Fayrer, Tantumquerry, April 28, 1775, CMTA, T70/1479/5, TNAUK. Richard Miles to Captain William Main, Tantumquerry, May 19, 1774, CMTA, T70/1479/7, TNAUK. Richard Miles to Captain Clement Noble, February 22, 1774, CMTA, T70/1479/7, TNAUK.

captives was so badly hurt that he could not be sent off the next day with his fellow prisoners; Miles shipped him off later. Other Africans were drowned. In August 1775, the boat of a slave ship, which had been collecting a group of slaves from the shore, was "over set by a large surf," killing two of the captives, along with two of the crew. Once canoes got beyond the pounding surf the crew paddled out to the slave ship. Slave ships usually anchored at either Cape Coast Castle or Annamaboe, where the majority of enslaved Africans were sold on the coast, and so enslaved people coming off from those forts only spent an hour or two on the water. Slaves departing Tantumquerry and the other smaller forts further to the east were rowed thirty miles down the coast, a six- to ten-hour voyage over rolling seas.[80]

Once the Africans reached the ship, they were subjected to another humiliating inspection by the captain and his surgeon. Prior to embarkation, Miles tried to make the Africans presentable, usually by shaving "their entire bodies" and smearing them with palm oil, as Romer wrote of his experience in the trade. Once they arrived on the ship, the sailors put the slaves "in a rank," that is single file, and a ship surgeon inspected them. Miles described the captives he sold as being "such as no reasonable person can Refuse," but allowed captains to send back "any" slave of whom they disapproved. He then offered a replacement of the same gender and age. Determining precisely how many people captains returned is difficult, because Miles did not note in his ledgers when he received rejected slaves. In his correspondence with ship captains between 1773 and 1776, however, he recorded the sale of 179 captives, of whom captains sent

[80] Miles noted the sizes of the canoes and boats in his ledger. Miles only postponed shipping off slaves if the seas were so rough that a canoe would inevitably flip. In September 1773, for example, Miles told a captain that "the sea is now so bad that's impossible without the greatest risque to get a Canoe off the Beach; if the Sea is better will dispatch them tomorrow ev[e]n[in]g (Richard Miles to Captain Benjamin Francis Hughes, Tantumquerry, September 4, 1773, CMTA, T70/1479/7, TNAUK). See also Richard Miles to Captain Joseph Fayrer, Tantumquerry, c.April 1775, CMTA, T70/1479/5, TNAUK. Richard Miles to Captain Joseph Cazneau, Tantumquerry, April 7, 1774, CMTA, T70/1479/7, TNAUK. Martin Watt to Richard Miles, Tantumquerry, August 9, 1775, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK.

back fifty-one, or just over a quarter. The range was considerable. In one instance, a captain rejected twenty-three of the forty-five slaves offered to him, whereas, on three other occasions, captains sent back just one out of the six slaves they purchased. Captains took the initiative in rejecting slaves offered them. John Hippisley, who commanded British forts in the mid-eighteenth century noted that even when fort officers were "careful in [their] purchase," they still had "some of [their] slaves rejected" by the captains.[81]

The letters that slave ship captains hastily scribbled to Miles explain their thinking. They often spurned teenagers and children. In 1774, Captain Edward Williams rejected a boy because he preferred a man. When Captain Fayrer received eleven men, five women and two children the following year, he dismissed the children because their price was too high. Captains were particularly loath to accept extremely young children. The *Sophia's* commander told Miles in 1776 that a woman he had received was a "very good one" but "her having a child" was a "very great objection." On the same voyage, he opposed taking a boy and girl in a group of thirty-two people. According to Romer, French captains were particularly notorious for their ruthlessness towards African children: French captains took "the child from the mother's back and throw it onto the beach, pushing the mother into the boat, and sailing away with her." Romer promoted a national stereotype, whereas his assertion probably held true for all ruthless captains who sent enslaved children ashore even if it meant separation from their parent.[82]

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[81] Romer, *Reliable Account,* p.226. Testimony of George Miller in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.388. Richard Miles to Captain John Hay, Tantumquerry, August 26, 1773, CMTA, T70/1479/7, TNAUK. John Hippisley, *Essays: I. On the Populousness of Africa : II. On the Trade at the Forts on the Gold Coast : III. On the Necessity of Erecting a Fort at Cape Appolonia…* (London, 1764), p.29.

[82] For captains rejecting children, see, Richard Miles to Captain Edward Williams, Cape Coast Castle, November 13, 1774, CMTA, T70/1479/5, TNAUK; Captain Joseph Fayrer to John Bartlett, Annamaboe Road, February 18, 1775, CMTA, T70/1479/5, TNAUK. Captain Darling likewise sent back five children because he objected to the price Miles had charged him for them (David Mill to Richard Miles, [Cape Coast Castle], April 20, 1774, CMTA, T70/1532, TNAUK). Captain Arthur Bold to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, [c.1776], CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK. Romer noted that the Fante initially presented mothers without their children for sale to Europeans. Only

Captains rejected enslaved adults who were sick or handicapped. Captain Bold sent back a man who had "a very bad ankle" and showed signs of severe mental distress. Another commander returned six captives who were "by no means merchantable" as they were "old, dropsical and with swell'd testicles." Captains rebuffed slaves for a range of ailments: a missing finger, "a very bad mouth," a bodily "blemish." Slave traders turned aside sickly people for fear that they would contaminate the entire ship: Captain King returned two men who had "gone to pieces with the scurvy," and Captain Robe returned a girl who had the yaws. Europeans feared, above all, "fluxes" and "fevers" that could spread through an entire human cargo. As one captain who sent back two women "ill of the flux" told Miles' brother (who was also a fort officer), he would not "have the ship infected with them." As Captain Thomas Phillips wrote of his experience purchasing slaves in the late seventeenth century, the commanders' of slave ships "greatest care of all" was to buy "none that are pox'd, lest they should infect the rest aboard." [83]

Captains seldom rejected enslaved people because of their ethnicity. As long as the captives belonged to one of the myriad ethnic groups that planters believed were enslaved on the Gold Coast then they accepted them. If, however, the slave was clearly from another part of the coast—something that would be indicated by the person's language, physical characteristics, and scarification—then the captain would reject the captive for fear that the planters would query the origin of the entire human cargo and potentially pay lower prices as a result. In 1773, Captain

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after the deal had been closed did the Fante reveal the child, forcing the Europeans to take it. Romer's tale—which he intended to illustrate the perfidy of the Fante—therefore reveals much about slave ship captains' callous attitudes towards African children (Romer, *Reliable Account*, p.181).

[83] For the rejection of sickly slaves, see, Captain Arthur Bold to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Road, [1776?], CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK; Captain Clement Noble to Samuel Gwyther, Annamaboe, September 21, 1775, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK; Captain John Dean to Richard Miles, Winnebah, February 16, 1774, CMTA, T70/1532, TNAUK; Captain William Thoburn to Richard Miles, [Cape Coast Castle?], February 22, 1777, CMTA, T70/1534, TNAUK; Captain William Thoburn to John Dixon, Annamaboe, November 24, 1776, CMTA, T70/1534, TNAUK; Captain Thomas King to David Mill, Cape Coast Castle, July 31, 1775, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK; Captain Archibald Robe to Richard Miles, Annamaboe, December 23, 1776, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK. Captain Peter Lawson to [Thomas?] Miles, undated, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK. Phillips, *Journal,* p.218.

Thomas Goodwin rejected a woman because he wanted a "prime asante woman as the coast can afourd," although the reference to the person not being "prime" indicates that Goodwin may have been equally concerned about the woman's health or age as her ethnicity. Captain Blundell was more explicit. He had received a woman from Miles and complained that she was "a Benin Slave," who he could not "think of Keeping" since "it may prove to be a great detriment to my average [sale price] in the West Indies, In case she was taken notice of." These instances were rare. Miles' voluminous papers contain no other cases where captains rejected slaves on the grounds of ethnicity.[84]

Miles undoubtedly refused to purchase large numbers of slaves because he sought men, women and children in proportions to suit the preferences of ship captains (Table 2.3). He reported that "European Traders generally prefer Two Thirds Males and One Third Females," an "assortment" that he was remarkably successful in obtaining. Over the course of his slave barters, exactly two-thirds of the captives he bought were male, and the other third female. Considerable variation occurred at the different forts, implying that the supply of enslaved people from the interior was also important. At Tantumquerry and Cape Coast Castle, almost seventy percent of the people that he bought were male, compared to sixty-three percent at Annamaboe. Given that the three forts connected to the same slave markets in the interior, the differing sex ratios over time likely stemmed from periodic changes in the supply of slaves rather than changes in Miles' purchasing strategies; as Miles testified, "Women are sometimes so scarce, that it is difficult to obtain" them. Even so, the remarkable parity between the demand of ship captains for a set "assortment" of men and women, and the almost exact proportion of male and female slaves that Miles purchased, suggests that he carefully selected slaves, and refused

[84] Captain Thomas Goodwin to Richard Miles, Annamaboe, February 18, 1773, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK. Captain Thomas Blundell to Richard Miles, Annamaboe, December 19, 1776, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK.

others. Miles eschewed purchasing children—who formed just seven percent of the 2,461 Africans that he bought—likely because captains returned them so frequently. Moreover, he paid fixed prices for the vast majority of the captives that he purchased, suggesting he must have routinely rejected the old, small infants, and the unhealthy. Testifying before Parliament, John Fountain, who succeeded Miles as the commander of Tantumquerry, admitted as much. "[E]ven in the cause of humanity," he told them, he would not "purchase what would be by me unsaleable, and by such repeated purchases make myself a beggar."[85]

Table 2.3: Proportion of enslaved males and females purchased by Richard Miles at Tantumquerry, Annamaboe and Cape Coast Castle, 1771-1780

	Slaves Purchased	Adults	Children	% Male	% Female
Tantumquerry	1,178	1,109	69	68%	32%
Annamaboe	830	759	71	63%	37%
Cape Coast Castle	453	422	31	69%	31%
	2,461	**2,290**	**171**	**66%**	**34%**

Source: Slave Barters by R.Miles at Tantumquerry, Accra and Annamaboe, 1772-1776, CMTA, T70/1264, TNAUK; Slave barters by R. Miles at Annamaboe…, 1776-1777, CMTA, T70/1265, TNAUK; R. Miles: Tantumquerry; rough day book., 1771-1772, CMTA, T70/1488, TNAUK.

Miles did not return rejected captives to the Fante. Instead, he imprisoned them in the fort, and attempted to re-sell them to another captain who might overlook their purported defects. When Miles sent six men and two women to the ship *Fame,* which was anchored off Cape Coast Castle in 1774, the captain turned away the women. The governor of Cape Coast Castle told Miles that he would keep them and try to sell them to the ship *Apollo* instead. A year later, the same governor sent seven women and five men "rejected by [captain] Champlin & [captain] Cazneau" to another ship captain. Thomas Westgate, who commanded Winnebah fort, told Miles

[85] Testimony of Richard Miles in *Report of the Lords,* p.61. Testimony of John Fountain in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.200.

that he offered the commander of the *Sally* "all the slaves that I have remaining" who were "very meagre" from "long confinement & irregular feeding." The captain of another ship had already been offered the same people but had "objected to them." Miles sometimes inadvertently sent the same slaves back to captains who had already rejected them: in 1776 Captain Robe returned a woman and a boy who he had had "ye refusall of some time since." The Fante also offered returned slaves to other captains. When Richard Brew rejected a person he described as a "very bad man slave" the Fante broker took the man, and offered him for sale to the ships along with three other captives. Gold Coast slave traders—both fort-officers and the Fante—took captives rejected by one captain and offered them for sale to others. As a result, enslaved Africans had to suffer through multiple inspections, sales, separations, and terrifying sea journeys as coastal slave traders ferried them between forts and slave ships in the search for a buyer.[86]

Europeans were thus presented with groups of slaves from the interior who "visibly ran the gamut in age and physical condition," as Smallwood has described. But not every person was "equally suitable for exchange on the Atlantic market." Rather, Europeans deemed particular people to be suitable for Atlantic slavery: enslaved Africans aged between eight and thirty-five who were sufficiently healthy to survive the Atlantic crossing and a lifetime of backbreaking labor. Europeans reduced these people to the status of a marketable good—a "prime slave"—that could then be assigned a fixed price and bartered for goods that met the African brokers' exacting standards of quality. The numerous Africans who Europeans rejected because they were too old, young, or unhealthy faced the misery of another sale to other slave ship captains, sometimes repeatedly. Enslaved people arriving from the interior did not pass immediately to

[86] David Mill to Richard Miles, [Cape Coast Castle], April 21, 1774, CMTA, T70/1532, TNAUK. David Mill to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, May 25, 1775, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK. Thomas Westgate to Richard Brew, Winnebah, August 14, 1774, CMTA, T70/1536, TNAUK. Captain Archibald Robe to Richard Miles, November 11, 1776, CMTA, T70/1534, TNAUK. Richard Brew to [Richard Miles?], Annamaboe, February 22, 1776, CMTA, T70/1534, TNAUK.

waiting slave ships. They suffered through a drawn out process during which Europeans carefully selected particular captives for Atlantic slavery and rejected many others.

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Richard Miles exemplifies how shore-based European slave traders carefully purchased enslaved Africans and then re-sold them to selective ship captains—a system known as the "fort trade." This arrangement was especially prevalent in the late seventeenth century when monopoly holding firms like the Royal African Company operated trading forts on the Gold Coast, Whydah, Sierra Leone, and in the Senegambia. During the eighteenth century, however, relatively small numbers of enslaved Africans passed through the dungeons of forts on their way to the slave ships. Slave ship captains instead purchased the vast of majority of enslaved Africans directly from African brokers in what was known as the "ship trade." In almost every slaving port on the African coast there was, as Captain Thomas Philips, who sailed to the Bight of Benin aboard the *Hannibal* in 1693, described, "more ships than one," the captains of whom "can't set their horses together, and go hand in hand in their traffick." There were "animosities" between the captains, who tried to "out-[bid] each other, whereby they enhance the prices to their general loss and detriment." Enterprising African merchants "make the best use of such opportunities" by "creat[ing] and foment[ing] misunderstanding and jealousies between commanders," increasing their profits from the "disposal of their slaves." Competition between ship captains was the norm on the African coast, and enslaved Africans were consequently forced onto a number of different vessels after their arrival on the coast. Nowhere was this more evident than at Bonny, the "largest, most efficient slave-trading port in the North Atlantic," as Behrendt has labeled it, because captains purchased large numbers of enslaved people and quickly departed the

river. From 1730 until the abolition of Britain's slave trade in 1807, thirteen slave ships typically anchored in the river every year, almost all of them British.[87]

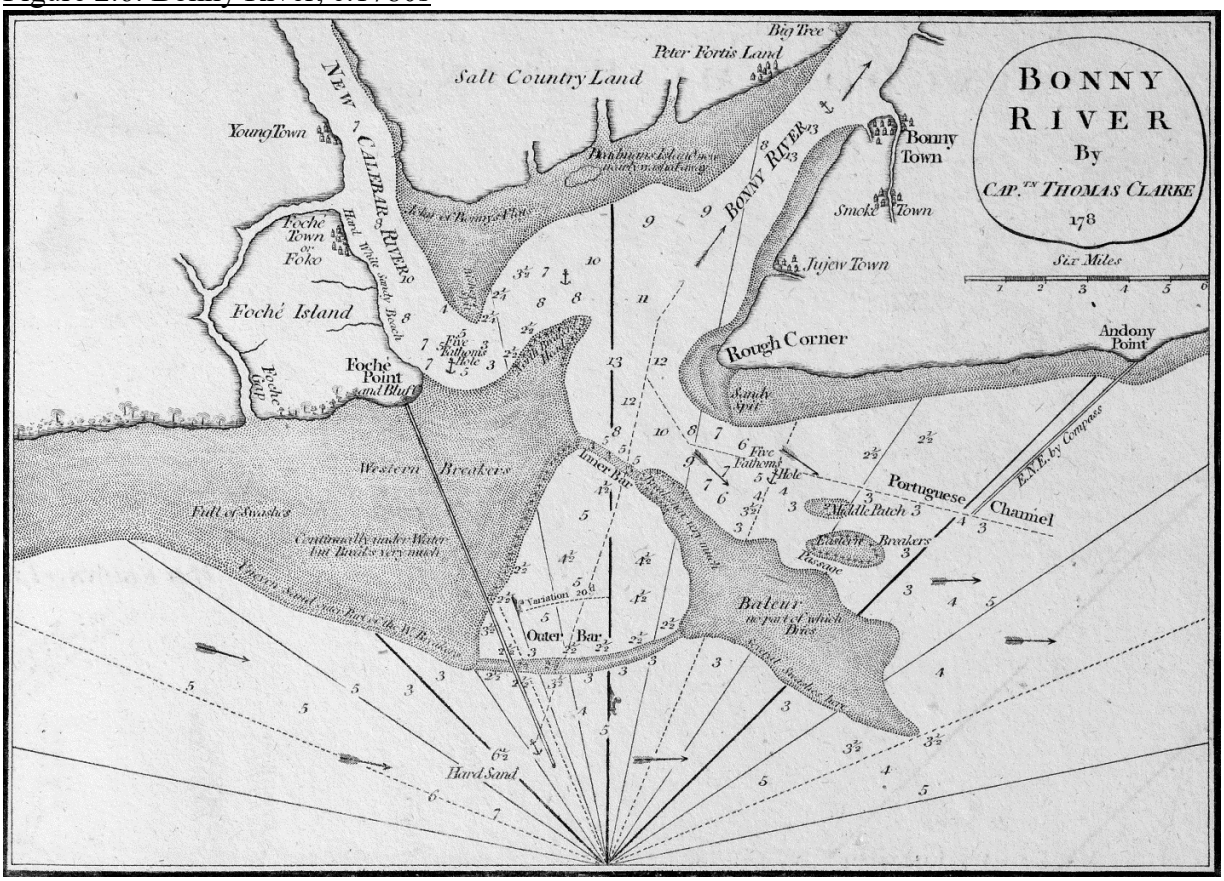
Despite its size and importance, historians have paid comparatively little attention to the slave trade at Bonny, principally because of a paucity of sources compared to other areas of the African coast, such as the Gold Coast, where resident Europeans produced voluminous records.[88] There are, however, two extant account books for two Bristol slave ships trading at Bonny in the late eighteenth century: the 1759 voyage of the *Molly,* and the 1792 voyage of the *Trelawny*, neither of which have been analyzed in detail by historians.[89] Analyzing these account books alongside the letters and testimony of slave ships captains trading at the port in the eighteenth century demonstrates the strategies that captains used to manage competition and obtain enslaved Africans arriving from the interior—shaping how enslaved people of differing ages and sex boarded the ships.

[87] For the ship and fort trade, see, Stephen D Behrendt, "Human Capital in the British Slave Trade," in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Anthony Tibbles, and Suzanne Schwarz (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp.66–97. *TSTD,* Principal place of slave purchase; Bonny, 1730-1808. Phillips, *Journal,* p.218.

[88] For the slave trade at Bonny, see, Lovejoy and Richardson, "'This Horrid Hole';" Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers*. Byrd looks closely at Bonny but his study encompassed Old Calabar and New Calabar too. Beyond these two works, other scholars have touched on the trade at Bonny when discussing trade in the Biafran interior, especially the enslavement of Igbo speaking slaves.

[89] There are only two complete account books for slave ships trading at Bonny before 1808 that record the purchase of slaves and the goods paid for them: the *Molly* in 1759 (Account book for the Snow, 'Molly', a slave ship," MSS/76/027.0, National Maritime Museum), and the *Trelawny* in 1791/92 ([Account book of the ship *Trelawny*], JRP, C107/15, TNAUK). The account book for the *Jupiter* in 1793 ("Ship Jupiter Old Wages Book," [1793], JRP, C107/59, TNAUK) details the sequence of slave barters but there are several large gaps where the captain did not note the goods he paid for slaves. The account book of the French ship *Guerrier* in 1790 is incomplete but does include a small number of notations that are revealing of the trade at the port ([Accountbook of the Ship *Guerrier*], 1J679, Les Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique, Nantes). With these four account books, Bonny is comparatively well documented compared to other Biafran ports. There is just one account book for Old Calabar (of the *Dobson* in 1769), and none for New Calabar, Cameroon, Gaboon, Rio Nazareth, or Saint Andrews. Richardson and Lovejoy did analyze the four account books for Bonny to determine the identities of the major brokers in the port but did not use them to analyze how captains bought slaves. They erroneously assumed that the account book for the *Trelawny* was for the *Rodney.*

Figure 2.6: Bonny River, c.1780s

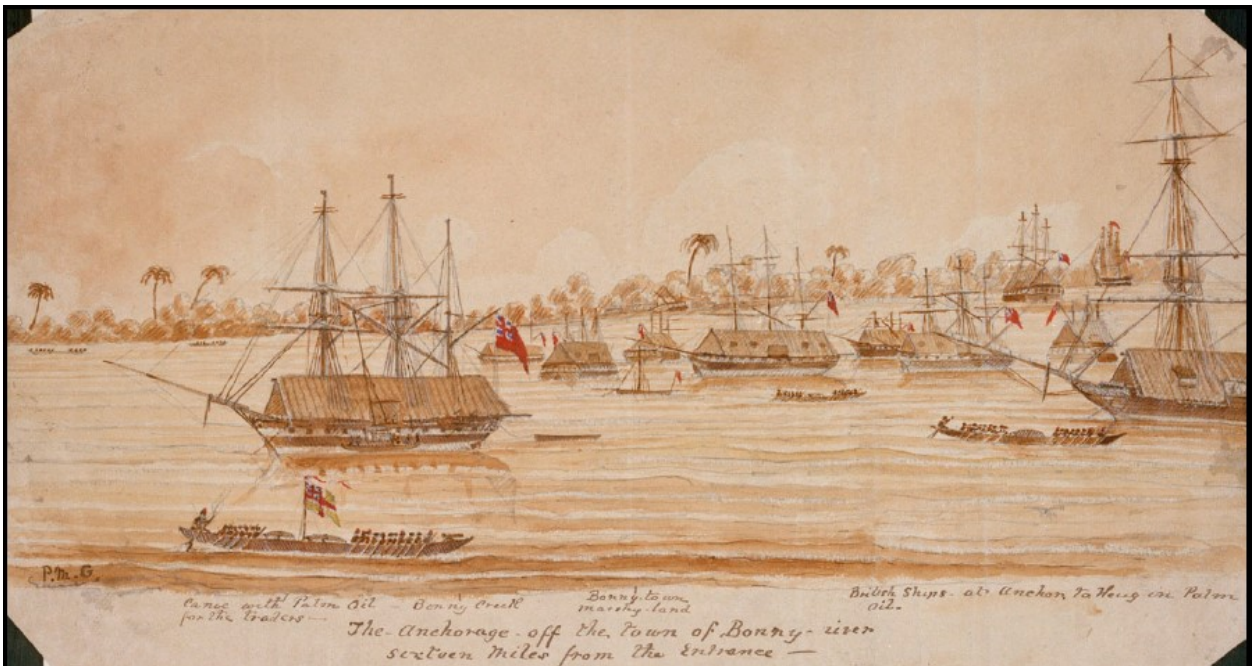


Source: Bonny River by Captain Thomas Clarke 178[?], *Marine Charts* (1807), MR 14.C.77 (68), I, Royal Geographical Society Library, London.

Slave ships arriving at Bonny passed over a treacherous sand bar, and then steered up the river, before dropping anchor a half mile off the town (Figure 2.6). The crew then prepared the ship for "receiving slaves," as surgeon Alexander Falconbridge described after visiting Bonny in the 1780s. They took down the sails, and the top masts, and then built a roof "over the ship to keep off the sun and rain." Using spars and masts as a frame, the sailors placed "mats" woven of "rushes of very loose texture, fastened together with rope-yarn, and so-placed, as to lap over each other like tiles." After the roof had been erected, the ship resembled a "great barn," the walls of which comprised a "lattice, or net-work" made of "sticks, lashed across each other, with four inch square gaps." At the waist of the ship, a ladder led to the deck through the only door in the

latticework, which was "guarded by a centinel during the day, and is locked at night." A "large trap-door" in the roof allowed trade goods to be hoisted in and out of the hold (Figure 2.7).[90]

Figure 2.7: "The anchorage off the Town of Bonny- river sixteen miles from the entrance," c.1820s



Source: PU1929, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

The political economy of Bonny was centered on the king, who controlled the slave trade in the port. The Perekule dynasty, or "Pepple," as the name was anglicized, from 1760 onwards held the throne. Beneath the king, the "Parliament Gentlemen," typically leading traders in the

[90] Alexander Falconbridge, *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (London, 1788), p.6. When the *Brittania* sailed to Bonny in September 1776, eleven days before reaching the port, the carpenter was "fixing upper rail on the main deck," and three days later he was "fixing upper railing for the netting," implying that the crews made preparations for constructing the "house" while still at sea. The captain brought his vessel in over the bar by taking a bearing on Foche point, which was adjacent to New Calabar. A boat went ahead of the ship to take soundings on the treacherous bar The crew were, two days after coming to anchor, "Employed building the house" ("A Journal of an Intended Voyage by Gods Permission in the Ship *Britannia* Capt Stephn Madge from Bristol to Africa and the Weest Indies," [1776-77], Harlan Crow Library, Dallas TX.). For the construction of the house, see also, William Richardson, *A Mariner of England; an Account of the Career of William Richardson from Cabin Boy in the Merchant Service to Warrant Officer in the Royal Navy (1780 to 1819) as Told by Himself*, ed. Colonel Spencer Childers (London: John Murray, 1908), p.49; Hugh Crow, *Memoirs of the Late Captain Hugh Crow of Liverpool…* (Liverpool, 1830), p.66.

port, possessed the offices of state.[91] The king and the leading men in the port each controlled canoe houses, which included numerous wives and domestic slaves, who crewed the large canoes that were central to trade in the Niger delta. The head of the household lived in a large wattle and daub thatched house, which they erected above the muddy ground facing onto the river. Each house had a landing place for the canoes, "separate house[s] for each" of the man's wives, and warehouses "containing European goods, designed for the purchase of slaves" as captain Hugh Crow, who visited the port numerous times in the 1790s recounted. The collected compounds of the headmen formed a bustling port town of approximately three thousand people by the late eighteenth century.[92]

A day or two after a vessel's arrival, the king boarded slave ships to "break trade," as it was universally known, and formerly give permission for the captain to purchase slaves.[93] James Barbot, who visited Bonny in 1699, described how this process worked. Barbot and his officers had a "conference with the king and the principal natives of the country" shortly after their arrival in the port, which stretched from three o'clock in the afternoon, until "night." Barbot could not agree on slave prices at the meeting, and it took four days of negotiation before they reached an agreement: thirteen bars (the trade currency at Bonny) for men, and nine for women,

[91] For the sequence of kings at Bonny, see, Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa and Adadonye Fombo, *A Chronicle of Grand Bonny* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972), pp.1-16. For the importance of the king to the slave trade at Bonny, see, Lovejoy and Richardson, "'This Horrid Hole," pp.363–92. For the "Parliament Gentlemen," see, Falconbridge, *Account*, p.9.

[92] For the town of Bonny, see, Crow, *Memoirs,* pp.195-96, 251; Falconbridge, *Account,* p.8; Hair, ed., *Barbot on Guinea,* II, p.675; Adams, *Sketches,* p.39.

[93] When the *Spy* came to anchor at Bonny in 1791, King Pepple came off in "his largest canoe and attended by several others," who the captain saluted by firing seven cannon and hoisting the colors (Richardson, *A Mariner of England*, pp.48-9). Captains gave Pepple lavish presents to "court his favour:" when Pepple boarded the *Spy* in 1790*,* the captain gave him a three-pounder cannon that the king could lash onto the front of his canoe, in addition to an expensive suit of clothing trimmed in gold lace, and a "cap with a plume of feathers on it" (Richardson, *Mariner,* pp.48-9). Bizarrely, Captain Crow brought the king a "beautiful figure of a female, about five feet in height" in 1806, carved out of wood (Crow, *Memoirs,* p.93). And a Liverpool merchant paid the ultimate compliment to the king of Bonny by naming a slave ship "King Pepple," a vessel that may have had a carved figure of the king on its prow, which made nine voyages to Bonny between 1786 and 1799.

"and proportionally for boys and girls, according to their ages." The king then "ordered the publick crier to proclaim the permission of trade with us, with the noise of trumpets." Trading at Bonny almost a century later, Captain James Fraser told Parliament that the king "settled" the assortment of goods to be included in the barter—and hence the prices of slaves—when a captain arrived in the port. The king established the prices by selling the captain a single male slave, or "break[ing] the trade as a trader" as Fraser termed it. When the king returned ashore, he announced the price at which he had sold the man to the other traders in the town, which then regulated the prices of women and children.[94]

African middlemen had a strong incentive to keep slave prices high and they had few qualms about withdrawing from negotiations or prohibiting specific captains to trade if they thought that the prices they offered were too low. Slave ship captains could do little to reopen the trade once Africans embargoed them. Outfitters of slave ships assembled a cargo to suit the particular tastes of the Bonny traders and a captain could not merely sail to another slaving port on the coast, with the exception of nearby New Calabar. Neither could the captain force the Africans to trade, a point well illustrated by a violent incident in 1757 when the king of Bonny "stopt" the trade in the river, as a captain trading in the port reported to his ship's owners. The captains went ashore together to "know the reason" but the king "used" them "ill" and so they "determined… to fire upon the town next morning" to "bring them to reason." The captains sent two of the vessels into a creek to bombard the town. One of the vessels, the *Phoenix,* had "scarce enterd the creek before they received a volley of small arms from the bushes" just twenty yards from the vessels while people in the town fired cannon at the ship. The vessel was in "such a

[94] Hair, ed., *Barbot on Guinea*, II, pp.687-89. Testimony of James Fraser in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* pp.20-1. When the *Molly* arrived at Bonny on February 1, 1759 the king sold the captain a man for twenty-two bars as the first transaction. The captains of the *Guerrier, Trelawny, and Jupiter*, which traded at Bonny in 1790, 1791, and 1793 respectively, also bought an adult male slave from the king as their first transaction; the *Jupiter's* and *Guerrier's* commanders both wrote in their ledgers that this occurred when they "broke trade."

shattered condition" that it could not be recovered, and it was soon plundered by the natives who cut the anchor cables "and let her drive opposite the town, where they began to cut her up" before "setting it on fire." Although an extreme example, the case of the *Phoenix* illustrates well the limitations that Europeans faced when they tried to re-open trade at Bonny through force.[95]

Yet, Europeans were not entirely at the mercy of their African hosts when they negotiated slave prices. Captains could wait for several weeks without trading especially if they had only recently arrived on the coast and had not purchased any slaves. Moreover, the Bonny merchants had an incentive to barter with the captains given that their livelihood depended on the slave trade. Captains could, therefore, attempt to beat down both the prices of slaves and alter the assortment of goods that would be paid for them and they therefore deliberately offered low prices for enslaved Africans when they first arrived at Bonny. When the captain of the *Earl of Liverpool* sailed to Bonny in 1797, for example, his ship owner ordered him to "propose to the leading Traders very low Bars to Begin with." If the traders disputed the price, then the captain was to "shew them a disposition to go to New Calabar" instead, which was visible from Bonny. In this way, the captain would "bring them to moderate terms."[96]

Captains were especially reluctant to offer high prices for enslaved people when they had just arrived in the Bonny River because they had to have the requisite goods that the Bonny brokers required for the purchase of every slave throughout their time in the river. Take, for example, the goods paid by the captain of the *Molly* in 1759 in exchange for 286 enslaved people. The captain included muskets; kegs of gunpowder; chelloes, niccannees, and romalls

[95] Captain John Baillie to Foster Cunliffe & Sons, Bonny, January 31, 1757, in Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, p.481. For the embargoing of ships by African middlemen albeit at another port, see for example, Captain Peter Potter to William Davenport & Co., Cameroon River, July 13, 1775, D/DAV/7; Captain Peter Potter to William Davenport & Co., Cameroon River, November 11, 1776, D/DAV/10.
[96] Richard Bullin & Company to Captain George Bernard, Liverpool, April 5, 1797, Trading Invoices and Accounts of the Earl of Liverpool, University of Liverpool Library (ULL), MS.10.50(1-2).

(each a type of Indian textile) in almost every slave barter (Table 2.4). The captain then included a selection of eighteen different goods that varied between each barter, such as blunderbusses, brass pans, iron bars, beads, brandy, bracelets, metals, hats, knives, pots, and gunflints. The number and quantity of goods that Bonny middlemen demanded for slaves grew over the course of the eighteenth century as slave prices soared because the prices of trade goods was static. Thirty-three years after the *Molly* had traded, the captain of the ship *Trelawny* purchased 328 enslaved people at Bonny. By that time, the number of goods included in nearly every barter had increased from five to nine, some of which were identical—such as guns and powder—and some of which were new—like beads; chintz, photaes (both Indian textiles); and iron bars (Table 2.5). Captains therefore had to include particular items in almost every slave barter, what we might call "core goods," which they supplemented with numerous other items according to the whims of the African brokers. Commanders who could not include even a single one of the core goods became, in the parlance of the slave trade, "unsorted," and could purchase fewer slaves. As the owners of one British slave ship cautioned their captain in 1768, African middlemen refused to sell slaves to ships that were known to be "short of any one article" that was "commonly" in demand.[97]

[97] James Clemens & Co to Captain David Tuohy, Liverpool, July 9, 1768, [Letter of Instruction for the Ship Sally], Tuohy Papers, TUO 4/3, LRO. On "unsorting," or "dis-assorting" as it was also known, see, "Parfitts Information…" BL, Add Mss 12131, pp.10-11. As middlemen, the Bonny traders had themselves to stay assorted to buy slaves from the Aro. "A trader once over-reached by an European," John Adams wrote of his experience trading at Bonny, "becomes an object of ridicule to his townsmen, and will not be easily induced to traffic again with the same individual." Some of the more "punctual" Bonny traders also warned inexperienced captains who were "too liberal in lending or giving" goods to themselves "be more circumspect" or, in the words of the Bonny merchants, "keep [your] hand shut" (Adams, *Sketches,* p.112, 114). Captain John Goodrich complained to his ship's owner in 1793, for example, that the poor quality of his manillas (brass bracelets) had "done us Much hurt" because he "cannot pass one" in trade and would, therefore, lose the equivalent of twenty slaves (Captain John Goodrich to James Rogers, Bonny, January 11, 1793, JRP, C107/59, TNAUK).

Table 2.4: Goods paid for 286 enslaved Africans in 160 Barters at Bonny, Ship *Molly*, 1759

	Type of Good	Price (Bars)	# of Barters Including item	% of Barters Including Item
Kegs Powder	Arms	1.5	158	100.0%
Muskets	Arms	3.0	153	96.8%
Niccanees	Textile	3.5	152	96.2%
Chelloes	Textile	4.5	154	97.5%
Romalls	Textile	3.0	149	94.3%
Iron Bars	Metal	1.0	80	50.6%
Barrs Brandy	Alcohol	1.0	73	46.2%
Neptunes	Brass Basin	3.0	66	41.8%
Caps	Apparel	1.0	62	39.2%
Arrangoes	Beads	1.0	47	29.7%

Source: Account book for the Snow, 'Molly', a slave ship," MSS/76/027.0, NMM.

Note: Thirteen trade goods were included in less than eighty percent of the barters. Goods in bold also appear in table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Goods paid for 328 enslaved Africans in 123 Barters at Bonny, Ship *Trelawny*, 1791/2

		Price (Bars)	# of Barters Including item	% of Barters Including Items
Kegs Powder	Arms	1.5	121	98.4%
B[est?] Guns	Arms	3.0	121	98.4%
Iron Bars	Metal	1.0	121	98.4%
Ind[ia] Romalls	Textile	3.0	120	97.6%
Chintz	Textile	4.5	120	97.6%
B[est?] Bafts	Textile	4.5	120	97.6%
Photaes	Textile	3.5	119	96.7%
B[arley] Corn	Beads	1.0	119	96.7%
Caps	Apparel	1.0	114	92.7%
Man[chester] Romalls	Textile	3.0	107	87.0%
China	Beads	1.0	105	85.4%

Source: [Account book of the ship *Trelawny*], [1791/2], JRP, C107/15, TNAUK.

Note: Twenty trade goods were included in less than eighty-five percent of the transactions. Goods in bold also appear in table 2.4.

Captains therefore sought to pay fewer core goods in their early barterers and then increased the size of their assortment—and therefore the prices they paid for slaves—as they

neared their departure from the coast. After enumerating the core goods needed in every trade, for instance, the owners of the ship *Ingram* told the captain not to "part with too many of those articles at the beginning of yr trade" because it would "dissort your cargo." The captain of the *Bristol Merchant,* which traded at Bonny in 1747, was explicitly ordered to "keep some of the goods you find most in demand to the last" so that he could "command" the trade "when you come near finishing your purchase."[98]

Merchants also warned their captains not to "stay long" at Bonny once their vessels were half filled with purchased Africans. At that point the "Signs of Sickness & Mortality," as the owners of one slave ship reminded their captain in 1774 "becomes great." A slave ship with several hundred people aboard was also a powder keg, as rebellious captives could use their numbers to rise up against the crew and regain their freedom. Once a ship was "half-slaved," as it was termed in the trade, its captain progressively increased the prices he offered to induce the brokers to sell larger numbers of slaves to his ship. As Captain James Fraser, who commanded nine different voyages to Bonny between 1776 and 1793, told Parliament, there were "two prices" paid by captains for slaves at Bonny, because "The ships that have been longest in the River, and preparing to sail, pay a higher price than the vessels lately arrived."[99]

The increasing prices offered by captains as they neared departure from Bonny River is evident in the account book of the *Molly*. In the three days after William Jenkins, the *Molly's*

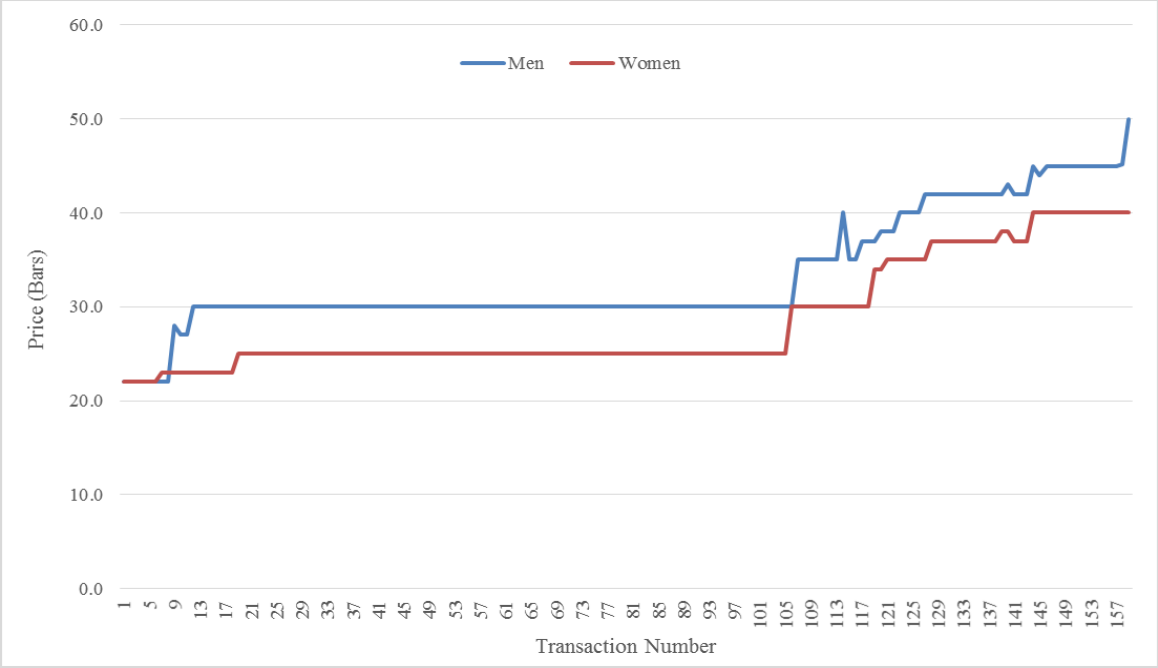
[98] Francis Ingram & Co to Captain Henry Moore, Liverpool, July 25, 1782, Tuohy Papers, TUO 4/9, LRO. The *Blaydes* traded at Whydah, but, as the owner's of the vessel pointed out, the captain should follow the instructions "at whatever place you slave off at." Henry Bright & Company to Captain John Brown, Bristol, c.March 1747 in Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers*, p.194.

[99] For the concept of "half slaved" see, for example, Captain John Baillie to Foster Cunliffe & Sons, Bonny, January 31, 1757, in Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, p.481. John Chilcott to Captain George Merrick, Bristol, October 13, 1774, Trading Invoices and Accounts of the Snow *Africa*, Bristol Record Office, G2404. Testimony of James Fraser in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, p.20. The owners of the ship *Swift* similarly told their captain in 1759, that when he had "half your Number of Negroes on Board" he should "value yourself thereon in the time of your Trade." Henry Bright & Co to Captain James McTaggart, Bristol, March 5, 1759, Bristol Record Office, 39654(2).

captain opened trade at Bonny on February 1, 1759, he paid between twenty-two and twenty-eight bars for enslaved men, and bought nine people (Figure 2.8); on February 4, 1759, he raised the prices he paid for men to thirty bars. When there were 162 captives aboard the *Molly* on March 24—over half of the ship's eventual human cargo of 286 people—Jenkins increased the prices for both men and women by five bars. Jenkins continued to raise the prices he paid over the next two weeks and, by mid-April, he was purchasing men for forty-five bars, and women for forty bars; Jenkins purchased a man at the end of his barter for fifty bars. Over the course of his trade, the *Molly's* captain almost doubled the prices he paid for enslaved people, with a significant increase in the prices he paid around the middle of his trade. Jenkins increased the prices he paid for slaves by adding in extra goods to his trading assortment. When Jenkins purchased an enslaved man for thirty bars he paid with two muskets, four kegs of powder, a chelloe, a niccannee, a romal, an arrangoe (a large bead), brandy, and caps. Jenkins later purchased another man for forty bars with an almost identical set of goods, but added two kegs of powder, an extra chelloe and niccannee, in addition to a brass pan that he had not included in the earlier assortment.

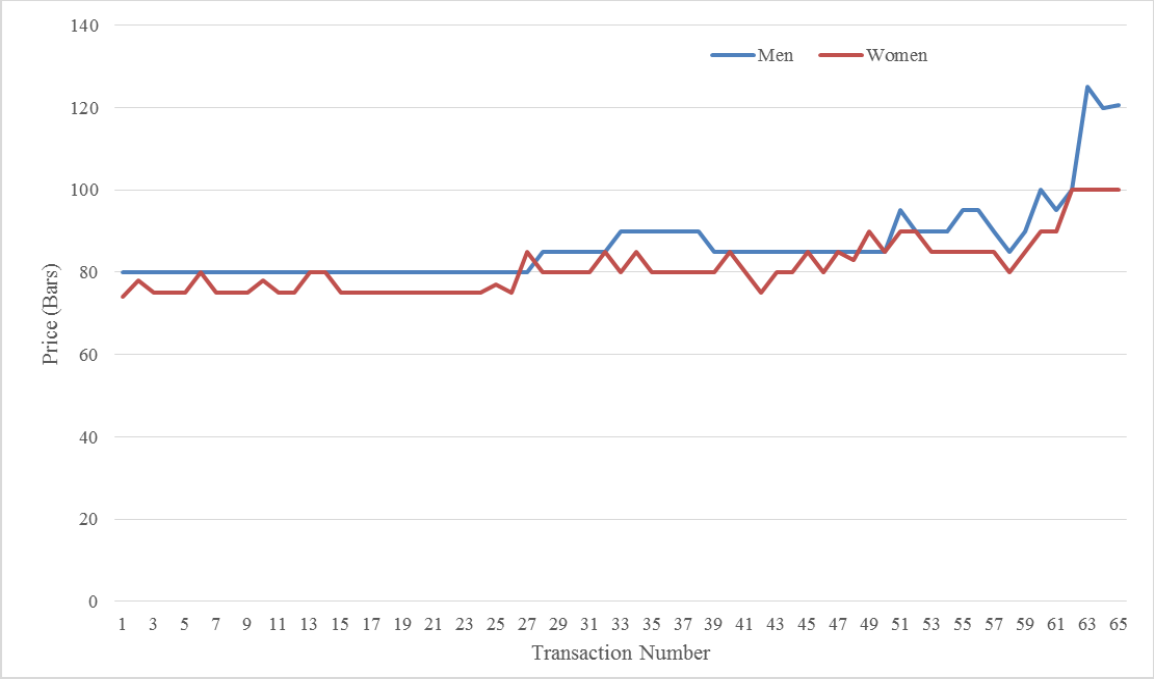
The *Trelawny's* captain pursued the same strategy, albeit with a less steep rise in prices over the course of his trade (Figure 2.9). The captain increased the prices he paid for men from 80 to 125 bars and included much greater quantities of quality Indian textiles in his assortment for the man at 125 bars, in addition to twenty-seven additional kegs of powder, and three higher quality guns. While captains did not immediately increase the prices they offered for slaves the moment their vessel was "half slaved," they did pay noticeably higher prices as they neared their departure from Bonny.

Figure 2.8: Prices paid for 125 enslaved men and 114 enslaved women at Bonny (bars), Ship *Molly,* February 1-April 27, 1759



***Source**:* Account book for the Snow, 'Molly', a slave ship," MSS/76/027.0, NMM.

Figure 2.9: Prices paid for 161 enslaved men and 156 enslaved women at Bonny (bars), Ship *Trelawny,* c.1791/92



Source: [Account book of the ship Trelawny], [1791/2], JRP, C107/15, TNAUK.

Captains trading at Bonny throughout the eighteenth century also progressively increased the prices they paid during their stay in the river. John Baillie, the captain of the *Carter,* wrote from Bonny in 1757 that he had arrived at the river two months earlier and found another ship anchored there which was "half slaved, and then paying 50 Barrs" for adult male slaves. Baillie had "only yet purchased 15 slaves at 30 and 35 Barrs" but "propose[d] giving more" once another ship had left the river. The captain of the *Sisters* told his employers in 1787 that the captain of the ship *Favorite* had "lay'd on barrs"—that is included more goods in their assortment to increase the price of slaves—and would soon obtain enough captives to go from the river. In 1791, Captain Woodville informed the owner of his ship *Rodney* that seven vessels would sail once the canoes arrived from the fair because their captains "pay very high to sail." Woodville was offering just seventy bars for enslaved men, whereas the vessels "that are going" were paying eighty-five bars. A month later, Woodville informed Rogers that he "did not get many slaves" at seventy bars, because the other captains had offered higher prices, but would pay seventy-five bars soon and would be "obliged" to pay eighty bars "for the last half" of the slaves he purchased.[100]

When Bonny merchants returned from the Aro's fairs with enslaved people, they were thus offered a variety of slave prices by numerous slave ship captains. "[W]ith colours flying, and musick playing," ship surgeon William James wrote after trading at Bonny in the 1770s, the canoe men paddled up the Imo river towards the Aro fairs. "[T]en or eleven days" later they returned with between four and nine hundred enslaved people, and sometimes as many as two

[100] Captain John Baillie to Foster Cunliffe & Sons, Bonny, January 31, 1757, in Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers*, p.481. Captain John Elworthy to Baker & Dawson, Bonny, January 12, 1787, E/112/1529/191, TNAUK. Captain William Woodville to James Rogers, Bonny, April 23, 1791, JRP, C107/13, TNAUK. Captain William Woodville to James Rogers, Bonny, May 16, 1791, JRP, C107/13, TNAUK.

thousand.[101] The merchants disembarked their prisoners at their canoe houses, where they forced them into cells and "oiled" and "fed" them to prepare them for sale, James recalled. Depending on their "opulence," each merchant bought, according to Falconbridge, "forty to two hundred" slaves at the fairs, who were "of all ages, from a month to sixty years and upwards," many of whom were "half-starved" and in a "miserable condition." In the early evening, the captains rowed across the river to the houses to "examine the negroes that are exposed to sale, and to make their purchases."[102]

Captains at Bonny, like their counterparts on the Gold Coast, had strict criteria when they selected enslaved people. They classified captives by their height, and deemed people over four feet four inches to be adults. Slave traders then selected people who fell within a range of ages, which varied according to the orders of their vessel's owners. When the *Bristol Merchant* traded at Bonny in 1747, the captain was ordered to "not pay [buy] any… children under three feet & ten inches."[103] Captain John Marshall, who traded at Bonny in the 1784/5, told Parliament that he "generally [made] a point, it was my orders indeed, not to purchase any under the height of four feet four inches," but had bought people as short as four feet on one voyage.[104] Captains also

[101] The precise number of captives brought back from the fairs seems to have varied depending on the number of slave ships anchored in the river. Surgeon William James, who sailed to Bonny in the 1760s, said that the fleets going up to the fairs consisted of "twenty or thirty canoes" each of which returned with "twenty or thirty slaves." That is, between four and nine hundred captives (Testimony of William James in *Report of the Lords,* p.48). Falconbridge, who traded at Bonny in the early 1780s, wrote that the traders purchased "from twelve to fifteen hundred" slaves "at one fair." (Falconbridge, *Account,* pp.15-16). Captain John Adams, who visited the port in the 1790s, said that the "Bonny people" departed in "Large canoes, capable of carrying 120 persons" and, after six days, returned with "1500 or 2000 slaves" (Adams, *Sketches,* p.39).

[102] Testimony of William James in *Report of the Lords,* p.48. Falconbridge, *Account,* p.15. John Adams wrote that the slaves were "sold to Europeans the evening after their arrival" (Adams, *Sketches,* p.39). See also, Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in *Report of the Lords,* p.48.

[103] For the use of height for determining age, see for example, Testimony of James Penny in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.39. Henry Bright & Company to Captain John Brown, Bristol, c.March 1747 in Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers*, p.194. The captain of the *Molly,* which sailed to Bonny in 1751, was also told not to be "imposed on" with any "little children" (Richard Meyler & Company to Captain John Fowler, Bristol, January 4, 1751 in Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers,* p.231).

[104] Testimony of John Marshall in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.378. For a similar order, see, Baker & Dawson to Captain John Hewan, Liverpool, January 22, 1785, E219/380, TNAUK. Baker & Dawson to Captain Ralph Abram,

received strict orders not to purchase "old infirm creatures," and to re-sell any "old" slaves that they inadvertently purchased, even if it meant a "Loss in Price."[105] Numerous Liverpool captains who sailed to Bonny in the 1780s and 90s were ordered not to buy anyone who looked older than twenty-five, and one captain was even instructed not to buy anyone over twenty.[106] Captains also received orders not to "not pay [i.e. buy] any old sickly or decrepit" slaves, or any that were "unhealthy."[107] Falconbridge listed eight "defects" that could disqualify a person as a "prime healthy" slave. "[I]f they are afflicted with any infirmity, or are deformed," he wrote, "they are rejected." William James likewise told Parliament that "No sickly Slave [was] ever purchased" in the three voyages he made to Bonny in the 1780s.[108]

Seeking the highest prices, Bonny merchants invited the captains who had "been longest in the river" to select from the slaves first, Falconbridge told Parliament. These captains carefully picked out small groups of captives who met their standards from the tens, and sometimes hundreds, of people who were imprisoned in the merchants' cells. The captains of the *Molly, Trelawny,* and *Jupiter* (a vessel that anchored at Bonny in 1793 and whose account book is partially extant), for example, never purchased slaves in groups of more than twenty, and typically bought people in groups of five or less (Table 2.6). All three captains purchased the

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Liverpool, February 6, 1785, E219/380, TNAUK. The outfitters of the *Lottery*, which traded in 1802, were more explicit: the captain should not buy any slaves aged under ten years old (Thomas Leyland & Co to Captain Charles Kneal, Liverpool, May 21, 1802, 387/MD/42, LRO).

[105] Richard Meyler & Company to Captain John Fowler, Bristol, January 4, 1751 in Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers,* p.231 and Henry Bright & Co. to Captain James McTaggart, Bristol, March 5, 1759, Bristol Record Office, 39654(2).

[106] See, for example, the orders for the ships Champion (Baker & Dawson to Capt Ralph Abram, Liverpool, February 6, 1785, E219/380, TNAUK) and the Sisters (Baker & Dawson to Captain John Elworthy, Liverpool, October 12, 1786, E/112/1529/191, TNAUK), Earl of Liverpool (Richard Bullin & Co to Captain George Bernard, Liverpool, April 5, 1797; Richard Bullin & Co to Captain George Bernard, Liverpool, June 7, 1798; Richard Bullin & Co to Captain Charles Watt, Liverpool, May 31, 1799, Dumbell Papers, GB141 MS.10.50, ULL), Lottery (Thomas Leyland & Co to Captain John Whittle, Liverpool, July 2, 1802, 387 MD 42, LRO), Enterprise (Thomas Leyland & Co to Captain Caesar Lawson, Liverpool, July 18, 1803, 387 MD 43, LRO; Richard Bullin & Co to Captain Caesar Lawson, Liverpool, September 25, 1806, Dumbell Papers, GB141, MA.10.52, ULL).

[107] Bright Meyler & Co. to Captain John Brown, Bristol, [March 1747], in Morgan ed., *The Bright-Meyler Papers,* p.194; Henry Bright & Co. to Captain James McTaggart, Bristol, March 5, 1759, Bristol Record Office, 39654(2).

[108] Falconbridge, *Account,* p.22. Testimony of William James in *Report of the Lords,* p.48.

largest groups of captives and greater numbers of adults in the final stage of their purchase. The captain of the *Molly,* for example, bought 116 enslaved adults in forty-one days before he began to progressively increase the prices he paid for slaves on March 22, 1759 (Figure 2.10). After that date, he bought 125 adults in just thirty-six days, including fifteen men and ten women from a single broker. Captains also ceased purchasing enslaved children as they neared their departure from the coast. The captain of the *Molly* purchased forty-five enslaved boys and girls soon after his arrival in the river in 1759. But when he increased the prices he paid for slaves, he selected just one boy and one girl. The captain of the *Trelawny* likewise bought just one boy after augmenting the prices he offered, having previously purchased sixteen children. The commander of the *Jupiter* purchased eighty-six "boys" and "girls" near the end of his purchase, but at the same price as adults, implying that they were teenagers who met the height requirement of adults.[109]

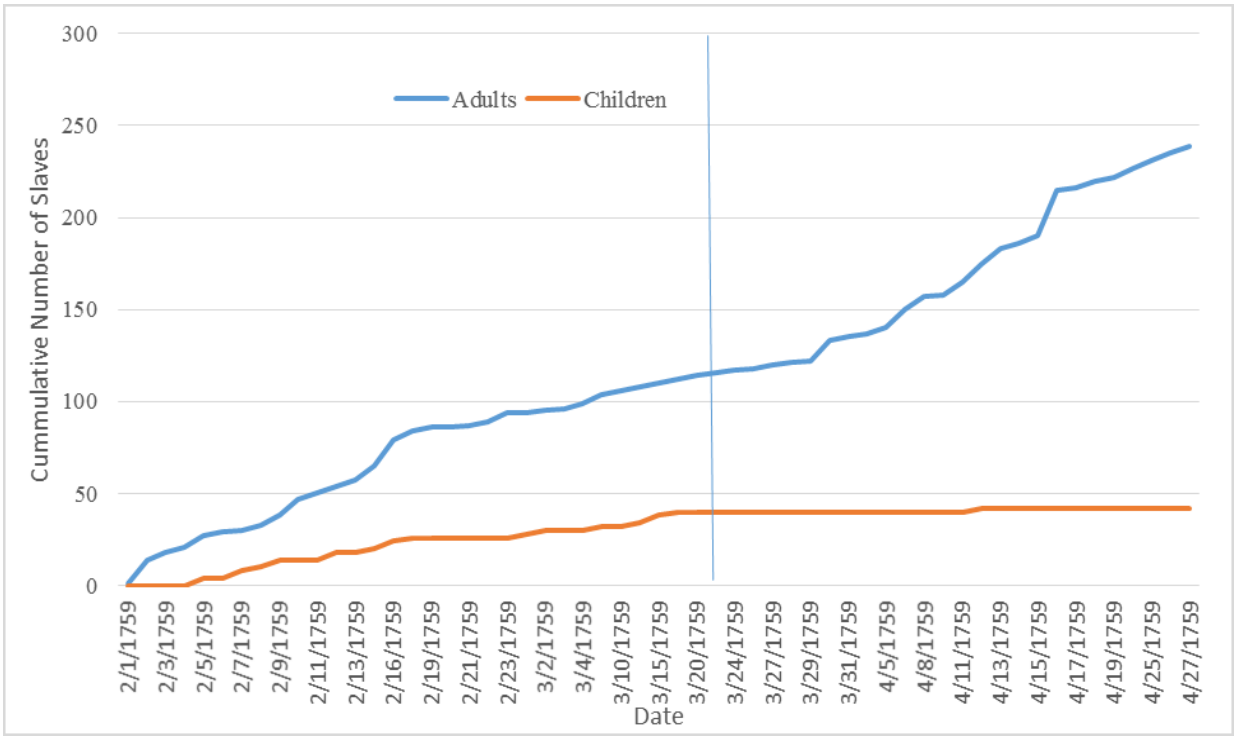
[109] Falconbridge, *Account,* p.15. Letters from captains trading at Bonny confirm that the ships nearest their departure had the first option on slaves arriving from the fairs. Captain Joseph Pitman, who bought captives at Bonny in 1738, told his employers that he found slaves "very scarse" soon after his arrival in the river, because several vessels that had departed recently had "ended" their purchase at "40 or 50 bars," and bought most of the captives coming from the fairs (Captain Joseph Pitman to John Strattens, Bonny, December 9, 1738, P74 MI, Gloucester Record Office). Captain Woodville told his employer in 1791 that the seven vessels that had been longest in the river would all be "ready for sea," because the "fair will be down," and so their captains would purchase enough slaves to fill their ships (Captain William Woodville to James Rogers, Bonny, April 23, 1791, JRP, C107/13, TNAUK)

Table 2.6: Lot sizes of enslaved Africans sold to the ships *Molly*, *Trelawny,* and *Jupiter* at Bonny, 1759, 1791 and 1793

Molly (1759)			**Trelawny (1791)**			**Jupiter (1793)**				**TOTAL**	
Lot Size	# of Slaves	% of Slaves	Lot Size	Number of Slaves	% of Slaves	Lot Size	Number of Slaves	% of Slaves	Lot Size	Number of Slaves	% of Slaves
1	108	**38%**	1	68	**15%**	1	58	**15%**	1	234	**23%**
2	62	**22%**	2	52	**12%**	2	48	**12%**	2	162	**16%**
3	30	**10%**	3	21	**8%**	3	30	**8%**	3	81	**8%**
4	8	**3%**	4	24	**7%**	4	28	**7%**	4	60	**6%**
5	5	**2%**	5	40	**13%**	5	50	**13%**	5	95	**9%**
6	6	**2%**	6	12	**8%**	6	30	**8%**	6	48	**5%**
7	14	**5%**	7	14	**2%**	7	7	**2%**	7	35	**3%**
8	24	**8%**	8	8	**6%**	8	24	**6%**	8	56	**6%**
9			9	18	**2%**	9	9	**2%**	9	27	**3%**
>10	29	**10%**	>10	64	**19%**	>10	30	**20%**	>10	40	**12%**
	286			**331**			**392**			**1,009**	

***Source**:* Account book for the Snow, 'Molly', a slave ship," MSS/76/027.0, NMM. "Ship Jupiter Old Wages Book," [1793], JRP, C107/59, TNAUK. [Account book of the ship *Trelawny*], [1791/2], JRP, C107/15, TNAUK.

Figure 2.10: Purchase of 239 enslaved adults and 47 enslaved children at Bonny, Ship *Molly,* February 1-April 27, 1759



Source: Account book for the Snow, 'Molly', a slave ship," MSS/76/027.0, NMM. The vertical blue line marks when the captain began to progressively increase the prices he offered for slaves.

After every captain had examined the slaves in a broker's house, there remained only "the refused Slaves"—those too young, old or sickly, to be considered worthy of purchase. Falconbridge did not know the fate of these captives but did see them "cruelly beaten" by the Bonny traders and, he alleged, murdered at New Calabar. Captain Fraser told Parliament, though, that the owners of rejected slaves sold "a few of them to the people on the sea coast, for low prices." The "youngest" slaves were, Fraser continued, "kept by the Bonny people in their houses," presumably to be trained as enslaved canoe men or porters. Bonny brokers "sent back" the "old or unsaleable" to the Aro, along with the "goods that have been paid for the Slaves that have been sold." These old and the sickly slaves likely served the remainder of their lives as African slaves, while some may have been later returned to the coast and offered for sale to Europeans again.[110]

Ship captains thus employed strategies to manage competition from other captains and simultaneously obtain healthy enslaved people at Bonny. Bonny merchants purchased large numbers of people at the Aro fairs, who ranged in age from infants to the elderly and included both the sickly and the healthy. Ship captains paid high prices that enabled them to pick out small groups of the healthiest adult slaves and complete their human cargoes enabling them to leave the river. Healthy adult men were hence much more likely to be quickly shipped off the coast than women and children and men consequently spent shorter periods aboard a ship. Other ship captains examined the people that remained and pulled aside any healthy slaves, usually women and children, who faced months trapped aboard the ship in the river, while the vessel filled with other slaves purchased at increasing speeds as the captain augmented his slave prices.

[110] Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in *Report of the Lords,* p.48. Falconbridge said that the traders at New Calabar "dropped their canoes under the stern" of slave ships, and "instantly beheaded [un-sold captives], in sight of the captain" (Falconbridge, *Account*, p.23). Testimony of James Fraser in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, p.52.

*

For "3 or 4 days" after she boarded the *Juno,* the unnamed woman from Lagoe had been in "fits" from the psychic terror that had stricken her on boarding the ship. The captain decided that she would not recover and had her "sent on shore" along with her child. No subsequent letter reveals the woman's fate but she was likely imprisoned in the fort and offered for sale to another ship captain by Richard Brew, the fort's commander. If the woman had indeed gone "out of [her] senses," then Brew would have found it impossible to sell her to another captain because captains rejected any slave who they thought to have physical or mental defects. Brew implied as much when he told Westgate that he would have to "stand the loss" of the price of the woman, and may have given her away to a Fante slaveholder. Meanwhile, 319 other men, women and children were carried away on the *Juno* in November 1774, and eventually sold in Barbados.[111]

The cases of the unnamed woman from Lagoe illustrates the divergent fates of enslaved people after they arrived on the African coast, a result of the process by which Europeans purchased slaves. European ship captains and fort officers did not purchase every enslaved person offered to them because they wanted to buy Africans who were healthy enough to survive the Atlantic crossing and young enough to be saleable to planters. They therefore forced enslaved Africans to undergo a humiliating bodily inspection and then ruthlessly rejected any person who they found to be too old, young or unhealthy. As one experienced slave ship officer described, "All that are sickly are refused… All such as are healthy… are purchased."[112] Coastal slave traders took enslaved people sent back by one captain and offered them to another and so

[111] Thomas Westgate to Richard Brew, Winnebah, July 10, 1774, CMTA, T70/1536, TNAUK. For the rejection of insane people, see for example, Captain Arthur Bold to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Road, undated, CMTA, T70/1533, TNAUK.
[112] [Testimony of Robert Towne] in Thomas Clarkson, *The Substance of the Evidence of Sundry Persons on the Slave-Trade, Collected in the Course of a Tour Made in the Autumn of the Year 1788.* (London, 1789), p.74.

enslaved Africans had to suffer through a potentially drawn out process in which they were offered to multiple captains over a sometimes lengthy period. Europeans thus commodified enslaved Africans, not by buying every person and then transforming them into "African slaves," as Smallwood and Diptee suggested, but by selecting certain people who met the criteria of a "prime slave."

While this chapter has focused on Britain's slave trade at just two African coastal regions there is ample evidence that captains trading on other areas of the African coast employed the same strategies. Willem Bosman wrote that slave traders of all European nations trading at Whydah in the early eighteenth century purchased slaves at "established" prices. The traders "thoroughly examined" them and picked out people "approved as good" while rejecting the "lame or faulty." Other British captains trading during the eighteenth century likewise reported that they rejected large numbers of enslaved people who did not meet their standards. Captain Richard Rogers, who purchased several hundred captives at Old Calabar in 1788, told his ship owner that he had seen "6 & 7 hundr[e]d slaves alongside my ship" of whom he had only bought one hundred. Surgeon James Arnold, whose job it was to examine captives brought to the *Ruby,* which traded at Cameroon in 1787/8, told Parliament that he and the captain rejected "full as many [slaves] as they bought." And when Captain James Fraser bought captives at Ambriz, on the coast of Angola, in 1775, he told Parliament that he rejected "twice the number… more than I purchased."[113] The fact that Fraser subsequently sailed to Bonny and purchased several

[113] Bosman described the "lame or faulty" as people "above five and thirty Years old, or are maimed in the Arms, Legs, Hands or Feet, have lost a Tooth, are grey-haired, or have Films over their Eyes; as well as those which are affected with any Venereal Distemper, or with several other Diseases" (Bosman, *New and Accurate*, p.364). Thomas Phillips, who traded at Whydah in the late seventeenth century, described a similar process. After inspecting the slaves, Phillips selected "such as we liked" and then "agreed in what goods to pay for them," the prices of which were "already stated" (Phillips, *Journal*, p.218). Captain Richard Rogers to James Rogers, Old Calabar, March 26, 1788, JRP, C107/12, TNAUK. Testimony of James Arnold in *Report of the Lords,* p.50. Testimony of James Fraser in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, p.43. Captain John Anderson, who traded along the African coast in the 1770s, told

thousand enslaved people also indicates that British captains employed the same strategies wherever they traded on the African coast.

New scholarship on the Dutch slave trade also demonstrates that captains of other nations likely used the same strategies. David Richardson and Simon Hogerzeil examined the account books of thirty-nine slaving voyages conducted between 1766 and 1793 to every trading region on the African coast. Using the quantitative data in the account books alone, Richardson and Hogerzeil discovered that slave ship captains purchased varying proportions of men, women, or children depending on the length of time that they had been trading on the coast. There was, they write, "a bias towards purchasing children and females at the start of loading and towards men in the final weeks." They suggested that captains used this strategy to preserve the health of enslaved men who, the authors found, suffered higher mortality rates than women and children aboard the ships. This chapter has shown that captains were likely motivated more by the desire to obtain healthy slaves in the face of competition from other captains. Even so, the parity between the British practices described in this chapter, and the findings of Richardson and Hogerzeil for the Dutch on entirely different areas of the coast, is remarkable and implies that ship captains employed identical slave purchasing strategies wherever they traded in Africa.[114]

European trading methods also shaped the demography of enslaved people entering the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The African slave trade dictated who was sent to the coast and who

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Parliament that he "He rejected a great many [slaves] for various Infirmities" (Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 69, p.45). John Ashley Hall, who traded at Old Calabar in the 1760s, reported that "Sometimes [the Old Calabar traders] offered an old Man or Woman [for sale]; but they were so invariably rejected, that they seldom brought them" (Ibid., p.49). Slave ship sailor Henry Ellison worked at the Gambia in the 1770s and told Thomas Clarkson that the Europeans there "examine them, and refuse such as have any defects, or at all sickly" (Clarkson, *Substance,* p.35). And former slave ship captain James Bowen reported to Clarkson that "Slaves must be scarce indeed, if any are purchased that are sickly" (Ibid., p.43).

[114] Simon J. Hogerzeil and David Richardson, "Slave Purchasing Strategies and Shipboard Mortality: Day-to-Day Evidence from the Dutch African Trade, 1751–1797," *The Journal of Economic History* 67, no. 01 (March 2007), pp.160–90.

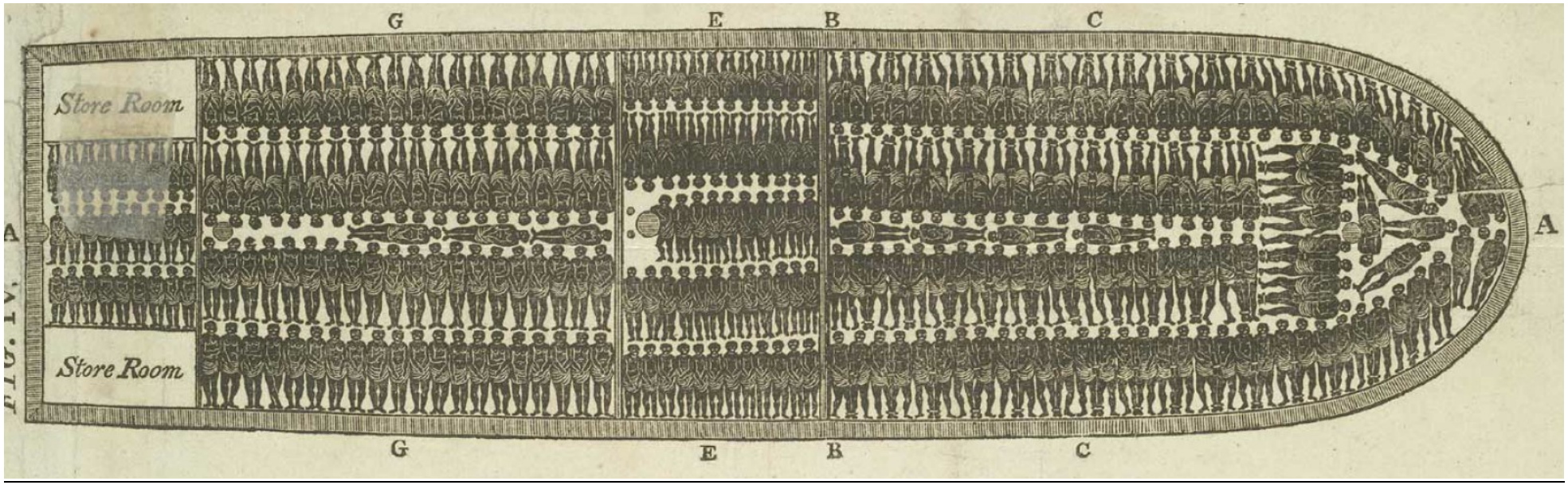
remained in the interior, with clear consequences for the gender, age, and ethnic identity of enslaved people entering the trans-Atlantic slave trade. African agency in the slave trade also meant that Europeans had to conform to the assortment bargaining system and deliver trading cargoes that met the shifting demands of powerful African traders. Yet, Europeans employed clear strategies to mitigate the power of African brokers and competition from other captains, enabling them to purchase only enslaved people that met their criteria of age and health. While African demand was crucial in determining who was sent to the coast, European demand was equally important in further sifting those people after their arrival on the coast, separating out the old from the young, and the sickly from the healthy. Slave sales were, then, important processes that determined who entered Atlantic slavery, and who remained in Africa.

Chapter 3- The Middle Passage

In November 1788, the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade published their famous diagram of the slave ship *Brooks*, an image that has subsequently come to embody the horrors of the Middle Passage. As Thomas Clarkson later recalled, the abolitionists had decided to depict a slave ship "with her real dimensions" to visually convey "the sufferings of the Africans in the Middle Passage." Their scale model of the *Brooks* included 470 Africans, laid in rows and columns with barely room to move from their position (Figure 3.1). To accurately depict how these Africans experienced the Middle Passage the abolitionists divided the ship into different apartments, each of which contained men, women, or children. Rows of people were depicted on bare wooden platforms above other slaves; the male slaves were shackled at the ankle at the wrist. The stark diagram captured the inhumanity of the slave trade better than reams of Parliamentary testimony and strings of pamphlets: here was the cruelty of the slave trade encapsulated in a single picture. Realizing the *Brooks'* potential to spur their campaign, the abolitionists printed thousands of copies of the image and disseminated it in newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, and posters. William Wilberforce even commissioned a wooden model of the infamous slave ship. As Marcus Rediker has rightly stated, the "*Brooks* represented the miseries and enormity of the slave trade more fully and graphically than anything else the abolitionists would find." [115]

[1] Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade, by the British Parliament* (London, 1808) II, pp.90-92. For the history of the *Brooks* diagram, see, Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*, Reprint edition (Boston: Mariner Books, 2006), pp.152-166; Rediker, *Slave Ship*, pp.308-42; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.19-77; Cheryl Finley, "Committed to Memory the Slave Ship Icon in the Black Atlantic Imagination," Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, 2002; Jacqueline Francis, "The Brooks Slave Ship Icon: A 'Universal Symbol'?," *Slavery & Abolition* 30, no. 2 (June 2009), pp.327–38; Marcus Wood, "Significant Silence: Where Was Slave Agency in the Popular Imagery of 2007?," in *Imagining Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. Cora Kaplan and John Oldfield (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.162–90. Wilberforce's model is currently in the Wilberforce House Museum in Hull, England.

Figure 3.1: Diagram of the *Brooks,* 1789



***Source**: Description of a Slave Ship [the Brooks]* (London, 1789)

The image of the *Brooks* is particularly important because it is one of only two contemporary drawings of Africans aboard a slave ship (the other being an 1822 sketch of the French slave ship *Vigilante,* clearly inspired by the *Brooks*). The image of the *Brooks* has therefore been used extensively by scholars; rare is the history of the slave trade that does not include it. Yet the diagram does not precisely capture what the *Brooks* itself looked like, nor the conditions for the enslaved Africans aboard the vessel, because the abolitionists did not draw the vessel from life. Instead, they obtained the dimensions of the vessel from a 1788 Parliamentary report compiled from the findings of Lieutenant Parry of the Royal Navy who travelled to Liverpool and surveyed nine slave ships, of which the *Brooks* was one. Using Parry's measurements, a draftsman drew the *Brooks'* deck plan and then added identically sized men, women, and children. Rather than using the numbers of slaves shipped on the vessel—information that was in Parry's report—the abolitionists depicted how many Africans would be imprisoned on the vessel if Parliament passed restrictions on the trade. They found that 470 people could legally be embarked on her—190 men, 70 boys, 183 women, and 27 girls. The *Brooks* had never carried that number of people on any of its previous voyages: on the voyage before Parry measured her, the *Brooks* carried 609 people; in 1784, 619 Africans; in 1782, 650 slaves; and in 1785, an amazing 740 captives. The image of the *Brooks* therefore depicted an imaginary idea of what the vessel might have looked like had particular regulations passed in Parliament, not the actual hold of the ship at sea.[116]

[116] There are a handful of images of other slave ships, but they almost universally depict the outside of the vessel, and not the slaves either on or below the decks. See, for example, the images of the *Friedensborg; Jason Privateer; Le Deux Souers; Jackson; and the Southwell Frigate.* Historians have drawn outboard profiles of the ships *Henrietta Marie,* and *Whydah Galley;* and also built an extremely detailed model of *L'Aurora.* There is a diagram of the slaves aboard the *Vigilante,* a nineteenth century French slave ship, but it is clearly modelled on the *Brooks* diagram. According to Clarkson, the committee assumed that a man would have "6 ft. by 1 ft. 4in. for room, to every woman 5 ft. by 1ft. 4 in., to every boy 5 ft. by 1 ft. 2 in., and to every girl 4 ft. 6. in. by 1 ft" in the *Brooks* image (Clarkson, *History,* pp.112-13). Parry's report is in "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in

In the absence of contemporary images, historians have assembled masses of quantitative data to explore the size of slaving vessels, the number of enslaved Africans forced onto the vessels, and the mortality that they suffered on the Middle Passage. Almost without exception, however, historians have used tonnage to gauge the size of slave ships, an imperfect method because tonnage measures the volume of a ship, not the area of its decks. As a result, tonnage cannot be used to describe the actual sizes of slave ships, the dimensions of the rooms where Africans were trapped, nor the degree to which enslaved Africans were crowded on the Middle Passage.[117]

There is, however, an enormous and overlooked source base that provides these details: the custom house records for Liverpool ships, which are extant from 1786 until 1808. Prior to 1786, British official records included almost no information on the size of a vessel besides its tonnage, a figure that ship owners deflated to save customs fees. In 1786, Parliament passed the Shipping and Navigation Act, which mandated that ships had to be measured by an independent surveyor to calculate tonnage. Although these records are lost for Bristol and London, they are complete for Liverpool's entire fleet of merchant vessels sailing between 1786 and 1808,

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the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK; and Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 67. Parry wrote that there had been 351 men, 127 women, 90 boys, and 47 girls on the recent voyage, 609 in total. The numbers of Africans embarked on the *Brooks* are from the *TSTD.*

[117] Eighteenth century slave ship owners understood the limitations of using tonnage to measure ships quite well. Archibald Dalzell, who commanded and fitted out numerous slaving vessels over a thirty year career in the trade, told Parliament that "The Surface of a small Vessel (say One hundred Tons) is more than One Half the Surface of a Ship of Two hundred Tons." Moreover, it was in the ship owner's "interest," as John Knox, a slave ship captain, candidly told Parliament, to have tonnages "registered as low as possible" to save customs and excise fees (Testimony of Archibald Dalzell in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.32; Testimony of John Knox, Ibid., p.92). For the difficulty of using tonnage to measure the carrying capacity of ships, see for example, D.P. Lamb, "Volume and Tonnage of the Liverpool Slave Trade, 1772-1807," in *Liverpool, The African Slave Trade and Abolition: Essays to Illustrate Current Knowledge and Research*, ed. Roger Anstey and P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool: The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1976), pp.91-112; John J. McCusker, "The Tonnage of Ships Engaged in British Colonial Trade during the Eighteenth Century," in *Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic World* (Hoboken: Routledge, 1997), pp.26-46.

including its slaving vessels.[118] The Liverpool Registers, when used in combination with data on the numbers of enslaved people embarked on slave ships from the *TSTD,* can describe both the sizes of slave ships, and the extent to which enslaved people were crowded on the vessel. When the surveyor measured the slave ship *Bess* in 1789, for example, it was 68'6" long, 21'10" wide, and was 4'5" high between decks. Multiplying the length of the vessel by its breadth gives the surface area of the ship's deck, in the case of the Bess, 1,495' square. Dividing the area of the deck by the number of captives embarked according to the *TSTD* gives the area in square feet per person—that is the level of crowding. The 206 enslaved Africans forcibly embarked on the *Bess* at New Calabar in 1789*,* for example, had 7'2" square per person. The registers are sufficiently complete to determine crowding on 1,917 slaving voyages made between 1786 and 1808, and eighty-five voyages between 1782 and 1785, because some vessels sailed both before and after the passage of the 1786 act. This is by far the largest and most accurate dataset providing information on ship crowding.[119]

[118] The Registers are held at the Merseyside Maritime Museum (C/EX/L/4). I entered them into a database, which I cross-referenced with the *TSTD*. The registers cover ninety-five percent of Liverpool slaving voyages between 1787 and 1808. There is no comparable source base for any other British slaving port; as maritime historian R.C. Jarvis points out, the shipping records of Liverpool "are the most perfect" of any in Britain (R.C. Jarvies, "Liverpool Statutory Registers of British Merchant Ships," *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire,* CV (1953), pp.107-22).

[119] The registers are not a perfect measure of crowding. Because the surveyors measured the ship above decks they did not take the exact dimensions of the slaves' rooms, which often included platforms that increased the amount of space in which the Africans had to sleep. Neither was the entire length and breadth of the ship occupied by rooms for the slaves, because the vessel often had storage room at the aft of the ship. Moreover, a ship was not a perfect rectangle, because it bulged amid-ships, narrowed to a point at the bow, and was wider below decks than above. The accuracy of the registers can be confirmed, however, using the detailed measurements of nine Liverpool slave ships taken by Lieutenant Parry in 1788 ("Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK). Parry measured the slaves' rooms, including the platforms, and therefore his report details the actual spaces that captives were imprisoned in, rather than the surface area of the deck. Cross-referencing the ships measured by Parry to the ship registers show that the area measured by the registers were all within twenty-five percent of the actual size of the rooms: *Bud* (register was 4% larger); *Kitty* (+23%); *Venus* (-13%); *Rose* (+18%); *Jane* (+9%); *Brooks* (+22%); *Brothers* (-6%); *Golden Age* (+23%). Previous studies of crowding and slave mortality have examined 763 voyages (Klein & Engerman, 1979); 100 (Postma, 1979); 478 (Cohn and Jensen, 1982); 765 (Eltis, 1984); 301 (Garland & Klein, 1985); 33 (Galenson, 1986); 92 (Steckel & Jensen, 1986); 1,410 (Haines, McDonald, Shlomowitz, 2001); 39 (Hogerzeil & Richardson, 2007); 22 (Eltis, Lewis, MacIntyre, 2010). All but Garland & Klein used tonnage as a measure of ship size.

Chapter 3

The Liverpool Registers, in combination with qualitative sources, offer new insights into the African experience of the Middle Passage, especially ship crowding, mortality, and morbidity. The size and layout of vessels used in the slave trade ranged enormously, and slave trading merchants outfitted ships to suit the market conditions and geographies of particular African ports. Africans were consequently imprisoned in very different conditions aboard ships depending on when and where they were forcibly embarked on the coast. The macabre calculations that merchants made when they planned their voyages secured densely packed ships. Crewmen also moved enslaved people about the ship as it became crowded and so enslaved Africans experienced their imprisonment differently, mostly dependent on their age and gender. Africans experienced extreme crowding for at least two months before they were carried from the coast, and then on the several week crossing, exacerbating mortality and morbidity on the Middle Passage. As a result, enslaved Africans arrived in the Americas in various states of ill-health after their trans-oceanic voyage.

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The abolitionists selected the *Brooks* for their famous image both because it was first to appear on Parry's list, but also because it was an average sized vessel, forestalling any accusations of bias in their selection. The *Brooks'* owner Joseph Brooks & Company had the vessel specially built for the slave trade in 1781. She was ship rigged and so had a foremast, main mast, and mizzen mast, each with square sails. The *Brooks* measured one hundred feet in length, and twenty-seven feet across the beam, giving a deck area of 2,650 square feet. A second deck stretched the length of the ship which was five feet and six inches high, sufficient space for the Africans and crew to just stand upright when they were below deck. The Liverpool customs house records show, however, that the *Brooks* was unusual in many respects. Most slave ships

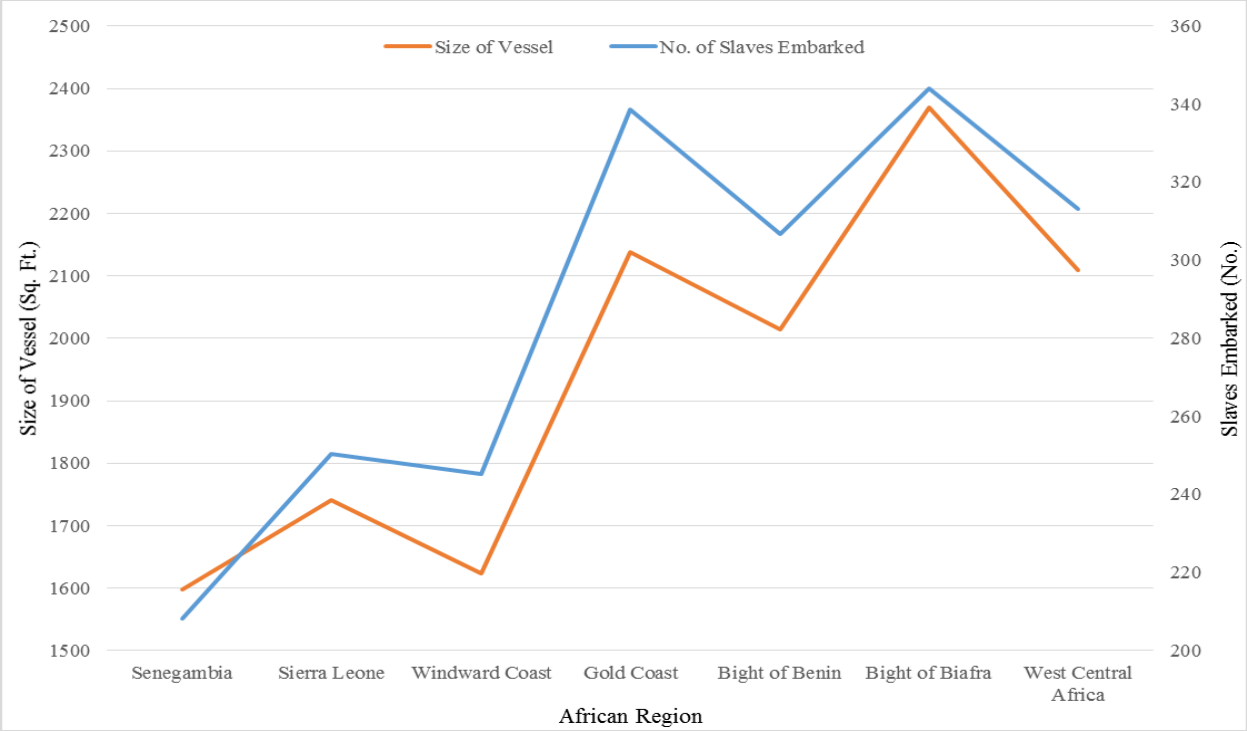
were not, like the *Brooks,* "constructed on Purpose" for the slave trade, as Liverpool merchants claimed. Of 606 ships recorded in the Liverpool registers, just 179—less than a third—undertook their first slaving voyage within two years of their construction—a possible indicator that they had been designed for the trade. Another third were between three and ten years old, and the final third were over ten years old; forty-one vessels had been at sea for over twenty years before they were used in the slave trade. Only a third (208) of these slave ships were built in Liverpool; 36 percent (222) hailed from either a British town besides Liverpool or a British colony; and the remainder (178 or 29 percent) came from America, France, Spain or the Netherlands, mostly as prizes taken in the American and French Revolutionary Wars. A small number of these prizes may have been slave ships built for the trade and taken on the African coast but the majority were likely merchant vessels that Liverpudlian traders converted into slavers. The *Brooks* was also atypical for its large size. The average slaving vessel measured eighty-five feet long and twenty-four wide, or 2,040 square feet, six hundred feet smaller than the *Brooks,* with a between deck space of five feet and one inch. The vast majority of enslaved Africans purchased by Liverpool captains were forcibly transported on seven-year-old-converted merchant vessels, not ships such as the *Brooks* that had been designed for the trade.[120]

Merchants selected ships of different dimensions and construction to suit the particular geographies and market conditions of individual African slaving ports (Figure 3.2). They sent large vessels measuring between 2,000 to 2,400 square feet to deep-water ports south of the

[120] As Clarkson explained, at the "top of [Parry's] list stood the ship *Brookes.* The committee therefore, in choosing a vessel on this occasion, made use of the *Brookes;* and this they did, because they thought it less objectionable to take the first that came, than any other" (Clarkson, *History,* II, p.91). Of the eight other vessels in Parry's report, three were larger, and five were smaller. According to Rediker, the abolitionists selected the vessel for three reasons: first, because it was top of Parry's list; second, because it would admit of "no complaint of exaggeration;" and third, it was "well known in the trade" (Rediker, *Slave Ship,* p.310). The *Brooks* depicted by the abolitionists was actually the second vessel to bear the name. The first *Brooks* was built in 1772 and made slaving voyages to the Gold Coast and Jamaica in 1775 and 1777. All measurements of slave ships are from the Liverpool Registers unless stated otherwise. Testimony of Norris in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.17.

Windward Coast, where they knew that enslaved people could be acquired relatively quickly. Slave traders sent their largest vessels to the Bight of Biafra, and especially Bonny—the "wholesale market for slaves" as one Liverpool captain described it—including the largest slave ship in the Liverpool Registers: the gargantuan *Duke of Clarence,* a 4,800 square foot leviathan that made two voyages to Bonny in the early 1800s. Conversely, merchants dispatched smaller vessels of between 1,600 to 1,750 square feet to shallow-water ports in Upper Guinea where the supply of captives from the interior was relatively slow. When Bristolian merchant James Rogers wanted a vessel for the Windward Coast trade in 1789, for example, his captain advised him that he would have to obtain a "small vessel," and should avoid those that were "too large."[121]

Figure 3.2: Average size of slaving vessels (square feet) and enslaved Africans embarked (number) by region, 1782-1808, (n=2,014)



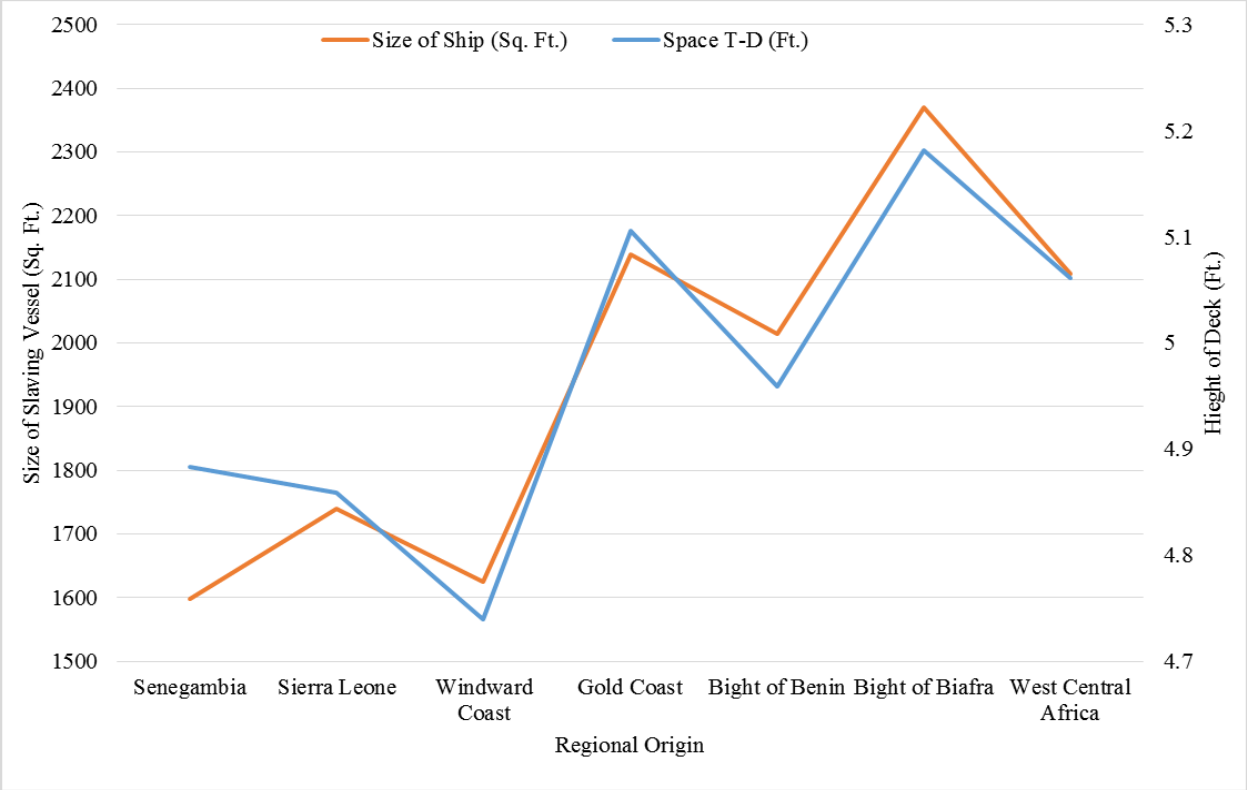
[121] Adams, *Sketches*, p.38. Captain William Roper to James Rogers, Liverpool, June 22, 1789, JRP, C107/5, TNAUK.

Source: To analyze the Liverpool Registers, I downloaded the Liverpool voyages documented in the *TSTD,* c.1782-1808 into FileMaker and then added in fields from the registers. The Liverpool Ship Registers Database hereafter. The number of slaves embarked is from *TSTD.*

In general, large vessels had more space between decks than small ships (Figure 3.3). Nevertheless, ship builders could change the height of the decks "to the convenience of the purchasers," as Rogers' captain told him. Outfitters of slave ships used the opportunity to adjust decks to imprison Africans who they knew would be of different heights depending on their regional origin. Ships sailing to Senegambia, for example, were usually small. Yet the between deck height of vessels destined for Senegambia—where captains bought taller men—was, on average, two inches higher than those of ships sailing for the Windward Coast, where Europeans bought "a much greater Proportion of small Slaves," as James Jones, the largest slave trading merchant in late-eighteenth century Bristol, stated. On the Gold Coast and in the Bight of Benin, by contrast, European bought larger numbers of adults who were, according to Jones, taller than captives from other parts of the coast. The between deck height of vessels trading at these ports was between three and four inches higher than ports in Upper Guinea.[122]

[122] Captain William Roper to James Rogers, Liverpool, June 22, 1789, JRP, C107/5, TNAUK. Testimony of James Jones in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.43.

Figure 3.3: Average size of slaving vessels (square feet) and height between decks (feet) by region, 1782-1808, (n=2,014)



Source: Liverpool Ship Registers Database

The *Brothers* and the *Bud,* two vessels that Lieutenant Parry surveyed during his visit to Liverpool, illustrate how slave ships differed in design and layout depending on their African destination. Launched in Liverpool in 1787, the *Brothers* was akin to the *Brooks* in being ship-rigged, with a large quarter deck and a forecastle. She measured ninety-four feet by twenty-seven feet, making her 2,538 square feet—slightly larger than the average vessel sent to the Bight of Biafra. Like other large slave ships, the *Brothers* had a system of grated hatches and ventilation holes ("airports" in the language of the trade) designed to draw air into the slaves' rooms below deck. A single rectangular grating measuring sixty-five square feet ran down the center of the main deck; beneath the quarter deck, an eighty-one square foot hatch drew air into the aft of the ship; and two gratings ran parallel to each other underneath the forecastle, each twenty-eight

square feet. Fourteen small vents pierced either side of the ship at regular intervals, each around six inches by six inches, and covered over with hatches that could be closed in bad weather. With a ten-foot draft, the *Brothers* was designed to anchor in the deep water port of Bonny, to which she voyaged six times between 1788 and 1793. No image exists of the *Brothers*, but a 1780 painting of a Liverpool slaver resembles her size and construction: a ship-rigged vessel standing high in the water with a prominent quarter deck and a wide deck, with ventilation holes piercing the side of the ship (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: "A Liverpool Slave Ship, about 1780"

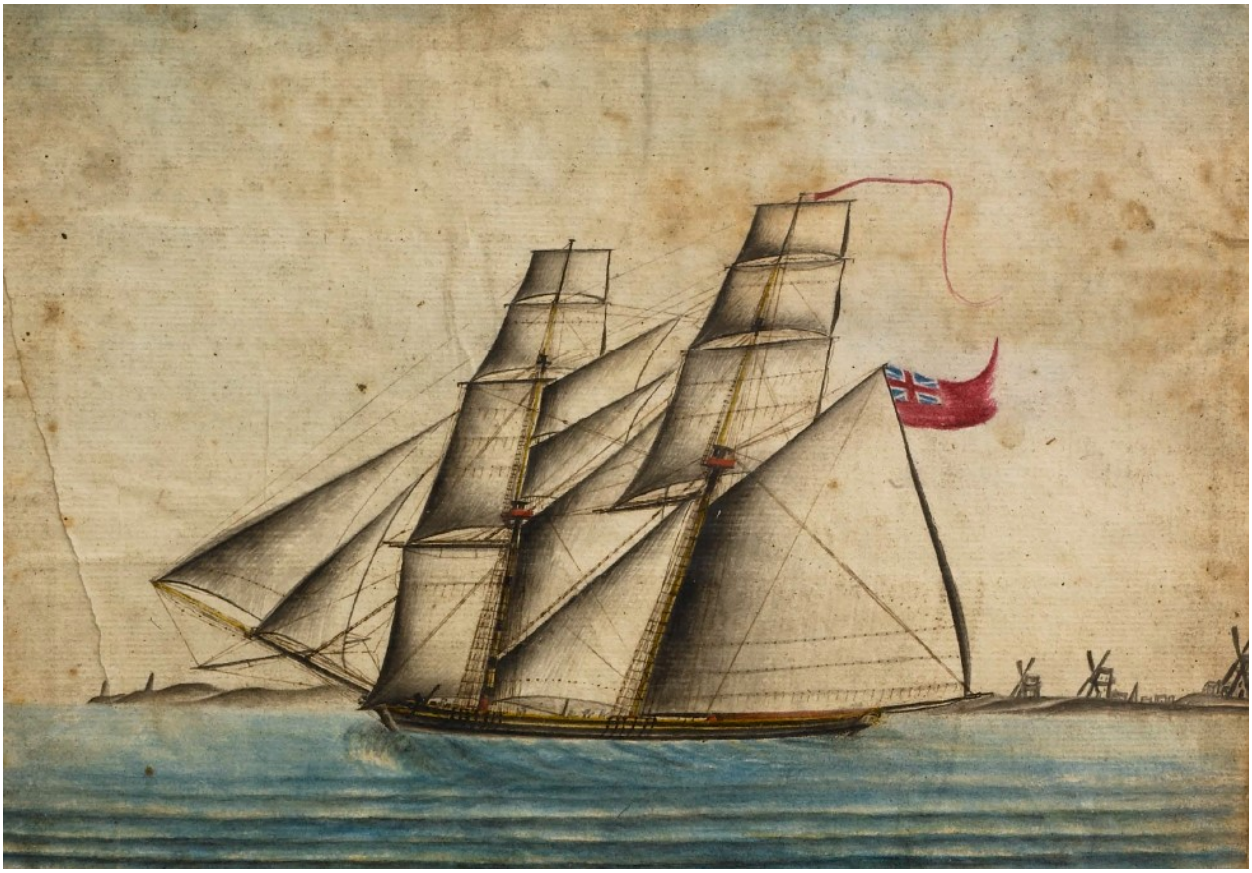
Source: William Jackson, **1964.227.2,** MMM.

The *Bud* exemplifies the smaller vessels that merchants dispatched to ports in Upper Guinea. Built in 1783, she made four slaving voyages to the Windward Coast, a region for which she was well adapted because of her draft of just seven and a half feet. Forty feet longer and nine

feet wider, the *Brothers* towered over its diminutive neighbor. The *Bud's* deck plan also differed substantially from the *Brothers.* As a galley built vessel, the *Bud* consequently had no quarterdeck or forecastle; her upper deck ran uninterrupted from end to end. The short deck had just one fifty-five-foot square grating and the builder cut two airports in her, probably at the front and back of the vessel. The poorly ventilated space between decks was made particularly claustrophobic by the five foot-high ceiling. A 1786 drawing of the *Madam Pookata*, a brigantine that made numerous voyages to the small Angolan port of Ambriz in the 1780s, comes closest to depicting the *Bud*. Although the *Madam Pookata* never visited Upper Guinea, the drawing reflects the shallow draft, and low profile of the small vessels that Liverpool's merchants selected for speed and maneuverability (Figure 3.5).[123]

[123] The measurements of both the *Bud* and the *Brothers* are in "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK. For the voyages made by both vessels, see, *TSTD.*

Figure 3.5: Brig *Madam Pookata,* July 1786



Source: **"**A log of the proceeding on Board the Brigg Mampookata on a Voyage to Ambriz on the Coast of Angola com[encin]g the 8th of July 1786," DX/2277, MMM.

Slave trading merchants thus selected vessels of different sizes and dimensions to suit the particular market conditions of the numerous African ports where their captains traded. Merchants knew that captains purchased Africans who varied in height and journeyed to the coast at different speeds. They also knew that their vessels needed to be adapted to the different geographies of African slaving ports, some of which were deep water harbors where large vessels such as the *Brothers* could anchor, and others winding shallow rivers and treacherous coast lines that were better suited for smaller vessels like the *Bud*. The diagram of the *Brooks* did not, therefore, depict the "typical" slave ship, because there was no such thing. Rather, merchants chose from a range of slave ships, depending largely on the African destination.

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After selecting a vessel, merchants calculated the number of slaves that their captain would purchase and the amount of space into which each of those Africans would be forced. Merchants sent their vessels to the coast for a specific numbers of slaves because they needed to lay in stores, such as foodstuffs, water, and shackles, and hire a crew in proportion to the size of the captive cargo. Moreover, merchants could not simply send their ships out with a quantity of money and needed instead an "assorted cargo" that could be used only to buy a specific number of men, women and children at a particular African port. As John Atkins, who visited the African coast in the early eighteenth century explained, the "Windward and Leeward Parts of the Coast are as opposite in their Demands, as is their distance." Moreover, the brokers' demands changed rapidly so that a commodity that was in "great demand" on one voyage might be "rejected" on the next. To obtain "Quick Intelligence" of the brokers' shifting tastes British merchants solicited "abstracts" from captains, which detailed the bundle of goods needed to purchase enslaved Africans at particular ports and used them to assemble a cargo. The merchant then loaded a cargo on the ship that they hoped to barter for a specific number of slaves—a vessel's so called "compliment."[124]

In the late eighteenth century, Liverpool slave traders used a system to ship slaves that had antecedents in the Portuguese, Dutch, and English slave trades of the previous century. As Alonso de Sandoval observed in 1627, Portuguese slave traders "locked" enslaved people "in the

[124] For crew requirements in the slave trade, see, David Richardson, "The Costs of Survival: The Transport of Slaves in the Middle Passage and the Profitability of the 18th-Century British Slave Trade," *Explorations in Economic History* 24, no. 2 (1987), pp.178–96. John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil and the West Indies…* (London, 1735), pp.158-59. For the use of abstracts, see for example, Robert Bostock to Captain James Flint, Liverpool May 3, 1792, Letter book, etc. of Robert Bostock, Vol 2: 1789-1792, 387 MD 55, LRO. Testimony of Robert Norris in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.17. The practice of fitting out ships for a particular number of slaves was prevalent throughout the history of the slave trade. In the late seventeenth century, for example, the Royal African Company, dispatched its vessels for an "intended number of slaves," which was calculated at the outset of the voyage. See, for example, "Shipps in the Service of the Royall African Company of England," T70/31, TNAUK.

hold" of their slave ships where they were "closed off from the outside so that they cannot see the sun or moon." They were also "shackled at the neck along a chain of six-by-six slaves, or two-by-two, fettered at the ankle," apparently for the duration of the voyage. In the mid-seventeenth century, Dutch slave traders learned that they could reduce mortality and morbidity among their captive cargo by increasing the scanty allowance of food and water and allowing the Africans on deck for short periods of time. By the late seventeenth century, English and French slave traders further developed the Dutch methods by segregating slaves by their sex and age above and below decks. Thomas Phillips, who captained the Royal African Company's ship *Hannibal* in 1693/4, noted that during the day the "men were are all fed upon the main deck and forecastle." The women "eat upon the quarter-deck" with the crew, and the "boys and girls" were "upon the poop," a smaller deck above the quarter deck. Below decks the men and women were, as Captain Barbot reported of his 1700 voyage in the Royal African Company's service, "lodge[d] … apart" in separate rooms that were divided by a "strong partition at the mainmast, with males forward and females abaft." Captains built a "sort of half-deck" along the sides of the rooms, to increase the holding capacity of the rooms—that is platforms like those depicted in the diagram of the *Brooks*. The slaves lay in "two rows, one above the other, and as close together as they can be crouded." Liverpool slave traders introduced no major innovations on the Royal African Company's methods; enslaved Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas in almost the same manner in 1800 as they were in 1700.[125]

[125] Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, pp.56-57. Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, p.156. Phillips also stated that captains "separate the men and women aboard by partitions and bulk-heads, to prevent quarrels and wranglings among them" (Phillips, *Journal,* p.229). Hair ed., *Barbot,* II, p.778. William Snelgrave, who captained thirteen slave ships in both the employ of both the Royal African Company and private English merchants between 1701 and 1730, wrote that the men were chained "together with Irons; but we suffer the Women and Children to go freely about." They were "fed twice a day, and are allowed in fair Weather to come on Deck at seven a clock in the Morning, and to remain there, if they think proper, till Sun setting… The Men Negroes lodge separate from the Women and Children" (Snelgrave, *New Account,* pp.163-64). The only change that private slave traders made to shipping methods was to

When Liverpool merchants planned a slaving voyage in the late eighteenth century they therefore knew that their ships would be divided into separate rooms for men, women, and children, and they clinically calculated how large each room needed to be, and the number of people who would be imprisoned in each. James Jones gave the most detailed explanation of how outfitters of slave ships made these calculations when he appeared before Parliament in 1789. While the vessel was in port the captain and the merchant "survey[ed] the Ship, to see how many [slaves] may be carried properly." By dividing the breadth of the vessel by the height of a captive they arrived at the number of people who could "lay crosswise," as Jones described it, in a vertical row perpendicular to the side of the ship. He reported that in a ship twenty-four feet wide, there would be room for "Four Slaves to lie crosswise," implying that each person was expected to occupy six feet of vertical space. Slave ship captains James Penny and John Matthews testified in the same hearings that adult captives ranged in height from 5'8" to 4'4"—the lower limit for a "prime" slave—but averaged 4'8" to 5', with women shorter than men. Children were, they continued, between 4'4" and 3'10" tall (given the way that captains selected children on the coast), but averaged 4'1". Different numbers of people would hence be laid in columns, because of the differences in their heights: in a twenty-four feet wide ship, for example, merchants like Jones expected four men, five women, or six children, to lie in a line.[126]

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stop allowing enslaved people on deck at night to use toilets, presumably because it prevented too many opportunities for insurrection. They had instead to use "tubs" that were placed around the lower decks.

[126] On a typical merchant vessel, the between decks area was a low ceilinged space with cabins for each officer, and storage rooms for provisions, powder, casks and sails. Carpenters knocked down the cabins and storerooms, and then erected horizontal "partitions" or "bulkheads" to create three separate rooms: the women's room, which ran from the mizzen mast to the mainmast; followed by the boys' room; and then the men's room, which terminated at the fore of the ship. Carpenters built the bulkheads out of four inch thick wooden boards, which were either a lattice work (like a prison gate), or solid, and each partition had a door with a lock. Testimony of James Jones in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, pp.39-44. For Jones, see, David Richardson, *Bristol, Africa and the Eighteenth-Century Slave Trade to America* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1996) IV, pp.xxi-xxxvii. Testimony of James Penny in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.39; Testimony of John Matthews in Ibid. p.41.

Having computed how many people would lie across the ship, the merchant next "judge[d], from the Length of the Ship's Lower Deck, how many [slaves] she will conveniently carry," as Jones explained, by dividing the length of the ship by the assumed breadth of a person. Jones thought that adult men required sixteen inches' breadth to lie down, and children just twelve inches, an opinion corroborated by Penny and Mathews. Although they did not state it explicitly, they allocated women around fourteen inches of horizontal room. By dividing the length of the ship by the breadth of a person, and then multiplying the result by the number of people who were meant to lie in a vertical row, the traders arrived at the number of slaves that would occupy the rooms. Given that merchants envisaged their vessel as a grid, they must have also thought carefully about the way in which enslaved people would be loaded onto their vessels. To put people in neat rows and columns, the ship's crew would have to lead the Africans into the rooms once by one and then force them into their assigned position, before bringing the next captive down and repeating the process. Merchants in counting houses and drawing rooms far from the African coast knew very well, then, how enslaved Africans would be brutally packed onto their vessels.[127]

Merchants adjusted the layout of the rooms and platforms to accommodate the varying proportions of men, women and children that they expected captains to purchase at particular African markets. Parry's report reveals that the rooms for the men and boys on almost every vessel collectively occupied around two-thirds of the space between decks—the proportion of male captives that Europeans purchased at most African slaving ports (Table 3.1). However, merchants made adjustments to the rooms and platforms to accommodate greater or smaller

[127] Testimony of James Jones in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, pp.43-44. Jones, like most investors in the slave trade, had never visited served aboard a slave ship or visited the African coast. Numerous slave trading merchants did, however, had lengthy careers as captains before they became merchants and so they would have known the wretched conditions that the Africans would be forced into on their ships.

numbers of men or women depending on their vessel's destination in Africa. Three of the four vessels that were fitted out for the Bight of Biafra, the region from which Europeans purchased the largest proportions of women, devoted the most space to women's rooms. The *Venus* had platforms only in the women's room implying that the captain anticipated purchasing relatively large proportions of women. Both of the vessels fitted out for the Windward Coast, where captains bought significant numbers of enslaved boys and teenagers, also had platforms in the men's and boys' room, but not in the women's room.

Table 3.1: Size of rooms as a percentage of all rooms on nine slaving vessels, 1787/88

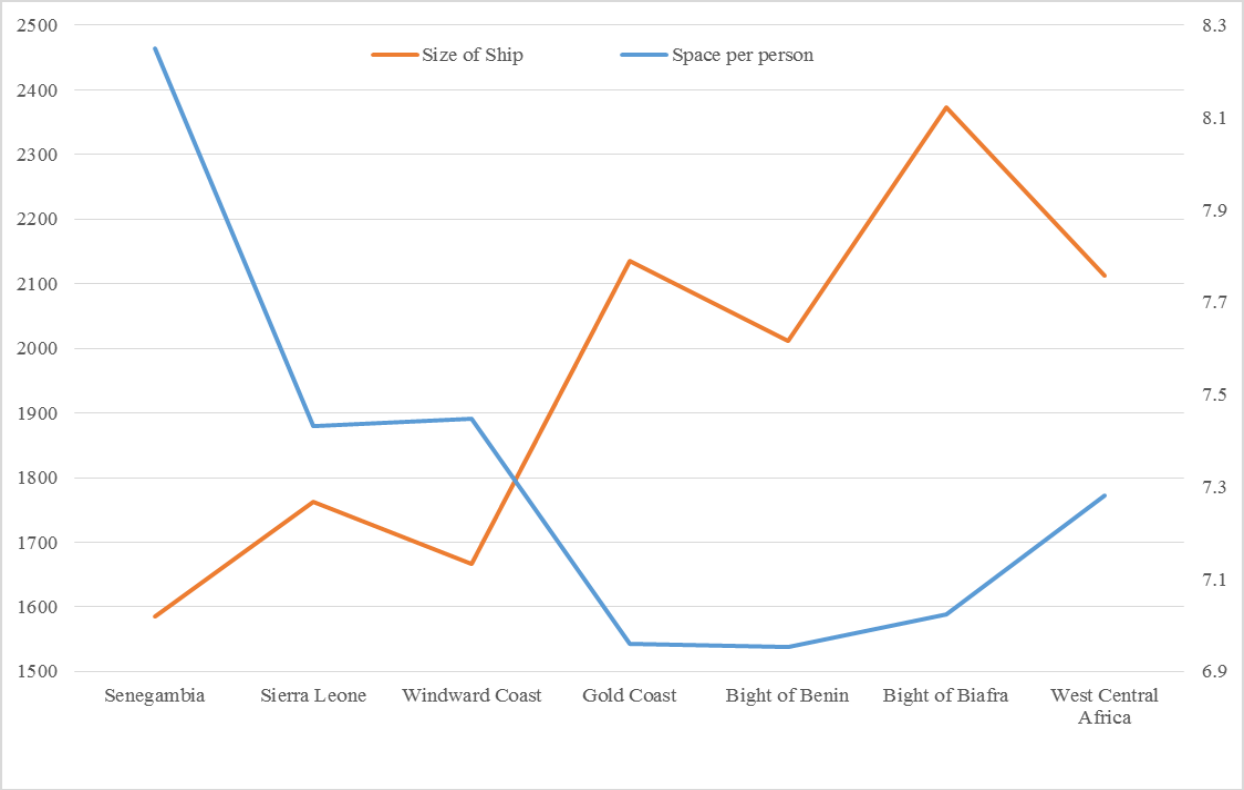
		Platforms in			Size of room as a percentage of all rooms			
Name	Coastal Region	Men's Room	Boy's Room	Women's Room	Men's	Boys'	Male	Female
Bud	Windward Coast	Y	Y	**N**	64%	13%	77%	23%
Rose	Windward Coast	Y	Y	Y	47%	21%	68%	33%
Brooks	Gold Coast	Y	Y	Y	51%	15%	66%	34%
Betty	Bight of Benin	Y	Y	Y	47%	20%	67%	33%
Kitty	Bight of Benin	Y	Y	Y	50%	17%	67%	33%
Golden Age	Bight of Biafra	Y	Y	Y	45%	18%	63%	37%
Venus	Bight of Biafra	**N**	**N**	Y	41%	20%	61%	39%
Brothers	Bight of Biafra	Y	Y	Y	52%	17%	69%	31%
Jane	Bight of Biafra	Y	Y	Y	45%	16%	61%	39%

Source: "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK

Merchants believed that enslaved people could be crowded differentially depending on where they were purchased on the African coast (Figure 3.6). They assumed that captives boarding ships in Upper Guinea required more room than Africans taken from ports further south. The amount of space allocated for enslaved people in Senegambia, where Europeans purchased particularly tall people, was almost 8'4" square, compared to less than 7' square for enslaved people departing ports in Lower Guinea. Moreover, a close correlation existed between

the size of slave ships and the amount of space that merchants allocated enslaved people. On large slaving vessels, merchants supposed that Africans could be squeezed together more tightly, possibly because the vessels had larger rooms above deck into which Africans could be moved, and larger ventilation ports. Frigate-built vessels like the *Brothers,* for example, had a quarter deck with numerous cabins and a forecastle that collectively measured half the size of the rooms below deck. Smaller, galley-built ships like the *Bud* had, however, neither a forecastle nor a quarterdeck, and so merchants assumed that the Africans would be all kept below deck. Slave ship owners selected particular sized vessels for African ports and adapted them to the specific age and sex ratios of the enslaved people who they assumed their captains would subsequently purchase.

Figure 3.6: Size of ship (square feet) and amount of space intended for each person (square feet), 1782-1808 (n=1,755)



Source: Liverpool Ship Registers Database; *TSTD.*

Merchants made macabre calculations when they planned a slaving voyage, with terrible consequences for the Africans who their captains later purchased. They dispatched small vessels with low decks and poor ventilation to ports in Upper Guinea because they assumed that comparatively small numbers of enslaved people would be crowded aboard. When they planned a voyage to Lower Guinea or Angola, by contrast, slave traders fitted out larger ships with high decks and gratings, designed to hold hundreds of people in cramped conditions. Slave trading merchants computed the dimensions of the slaves' rooms that, they assumed, would be filled with men, women, and children in specific proportions. Africans would, they believed, sleep in a grid pattern, filling the ship to its maximum capacity. They cared little, then, for the enslaved people who they thought could be packed tightly together. The diagram of the *Brooks* thus accurately captures how the merchants who outfitted slaving voyages envisaged their ships—with Africans of equal height neatly arrayed in identical columns and rows.

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Captains converted their vessels into floating prisons designed to hold hundreds of people as they traveled from Britain to the African coast. As the ship neared the Canary or Cape Verde islands, the carpenter first "raised the gratings" by cutting holes into the main deck and then constructing the numerous hatchways several feet above the level of the deck. The captain next had the area between decks cleared of timber, ropes and barrels, so that the carpenter could build the bulkheads and platforms that formed the slaves' rooms. On the *Duke of Argyll's* 1750 voyage to Sierra Leone, Captain John Newton wrote in his exceptionally detailed logbook that he "marked off the slaves' rooms" by drawing lines across the deck, where the carpenter then built partitions. Newton did not state how he knew where to put these lines, but he presumably

computed the rooms' dimensions prior to his departure from Liverpool.[128] Once the partitions had been constructed, a task that typically took at least a week, the carpenter went above deck and began work on the barricado, a wooden wall that bisected the ship a foot or two ahead of the mainmast.[129] The crew rolled two carriage guns to windows besides the barricado, and affixed "swivel blunderbusses" to the top of it, as Newton described, which could be used to rake the deck with shot in the case of an insurrection. Once finished, the barricado had a "formidable appearance" when viewed from the main-deck—where hundreds of potentially rebellious men would soon be imprisoned.[130]

The first few slaves that the captain purchased entered the near-empty ship while the work of turning the vessel into a floating prison was underway and were often forced to work alongside the crew. When the first thirty captives arrived on the ship *Hudibras,* which traded at Old Calabar in 1786, they were put to work "cleaning the decks, both above and below" under the supervision of a boy sailor. A "number of boys and girls" worked aboard the ship *Spy,* at anchor at Bonny in 1792, "hand[ing] up firewood and yams" and "assist[ing] the cook in peeling

[128] Logbook of the *Duke of Argyll,* October 4-October 24, 1750, LOG/M/46, NMM. For the construction of the gratings on the outward voyage, see also, Logbook of the *Black Prince,* May 25, 1763, (East Ardsley: EP Microform, 1967); Logbook of the *Unity,* September 28, 1769, Earle Family Papers, D/EARLE/1/4, LRO; Logbook of the *Britannia,* August 5, 1776, Harlan Crow Library, Dallas TX. For the height of the gratings, see also, Testimony of John Knox in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.86; Clarkson, *Substance,* p.75; Falconbridge, *Account,* p.25. Once the slaves had been sold in the Americas, the carpenter "sheathed" the gratings, presumably to prevent water washing below on the return voyage to Europe. See, for example, Logbook of the *Crescent,* July 23, 1789, HCA16/83, TNAUK.

[129] The barricado was nine or ten feet high and protruded three or four feet over the ship's side, "so that people cannot go round it." The carpenter cut two doors through the "star board or right hand side" of the barricado, one above the other, that were together "not so large as a common house door." The upper door was "the size of a small window," enabling the crew to peer through and observe the slaves on the main deck whereas the lower door was small enough to allow a single person to pass through by "stoop[ing]" (Deirdre Coleman ed., Henry Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," in Brycchan Carey and Peter J. Kitson, eds., *Slavery and the Cultures of Abolition: Essays Marking the Bicentennial of the British Abolition Act of 1807* (Rochester, NY: D.S.Brewer, 2007), p.141).

[130] Constructing the barricado was a drawn out task: when the *Gregson* sailed to the Gold Coast in December 1787, for example, the barricado was only "half built" two weeks after the carpenter had begun construction (Logbook of the *Gregson*, December 24, 1787, HCA1/85, TNAUK). As the carpenter hammered the barricado together the crew manufactured nets, which they strung around the vessel to prevent potentially suicidal slaves from leaping over the sides, and keep coastal people from slipping aboard and stealing goods or slaves. Logbook of the *Duke of Argyll,* December 7, 1750, LOG/M/46, NMM.

them." Women also helped the cooks on slave ships by "pounding, washing, and boiling rice," as Henry Smeathman, a naturalist stationed at Sierra Leone described after visiting numerous slave ships in the 1790s. These Africans slept in rooms below deck that were often filled with ropes, sails, barrels, lumber, and even chests of arms, and enclosed by half-finished partitions and platforms, as the carpenter continued his work of closing off the rooms.[131]

Once the captain had bought a number of adult African men, however, he instituted strict discipline. Thirty-one days after the *Duke of Argyll* anchored at Sierra Leone, Captain Newton had purchased thirty-two enslaved people: nine men, eleven boys, four women and eight girls. On December 17, 1750, Newton bought three men and, the next day he ordered that the crew begin "with chains and sentrys," because he feared that the "12 men slaves" could stage an insurrection against his crew of thirty men. The crew locked every male slave to another man by their wrist and ankle; odd numbers of captives had both of their legs and hands linked together.[132] The "chains" that Newton referred to were long "deck chains" that ran the length of the deck to which pairs of enslaved men were chained whenever they were on deck. In good weather, the crew brought the captives up on deck at eight or nine in the morning. The men came up the hatchway in pairs but were held at the top of the stair by the first mate, who inspected their shackles and chains for signs of tampering. The mate then sent the pair of men to one side of the main-deck where another crewman locked the pair into the deck chain, which was securely locked on the other side of the barricado. Two "sentrys," the so-called "starboard" and "larboard" sentinels, stood on a "stage" erected on top of the barricado, armed "with musquets and bayonets" and watched over each side of the deck. Another man stood at the barricado door

[131] William Butterworth, *Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South-Carolina and Georgia* (Leeds, 1831), p.39. Richardson, *A Mariner of England*, p.62. Coleman ed., Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," p.143.
[132] Logbook of the *Duke of Argyll,* December 18, 1750, LOG/M/46, NMM. For the weight of the shackles, see, Testimony of Thomas King in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* p.255.

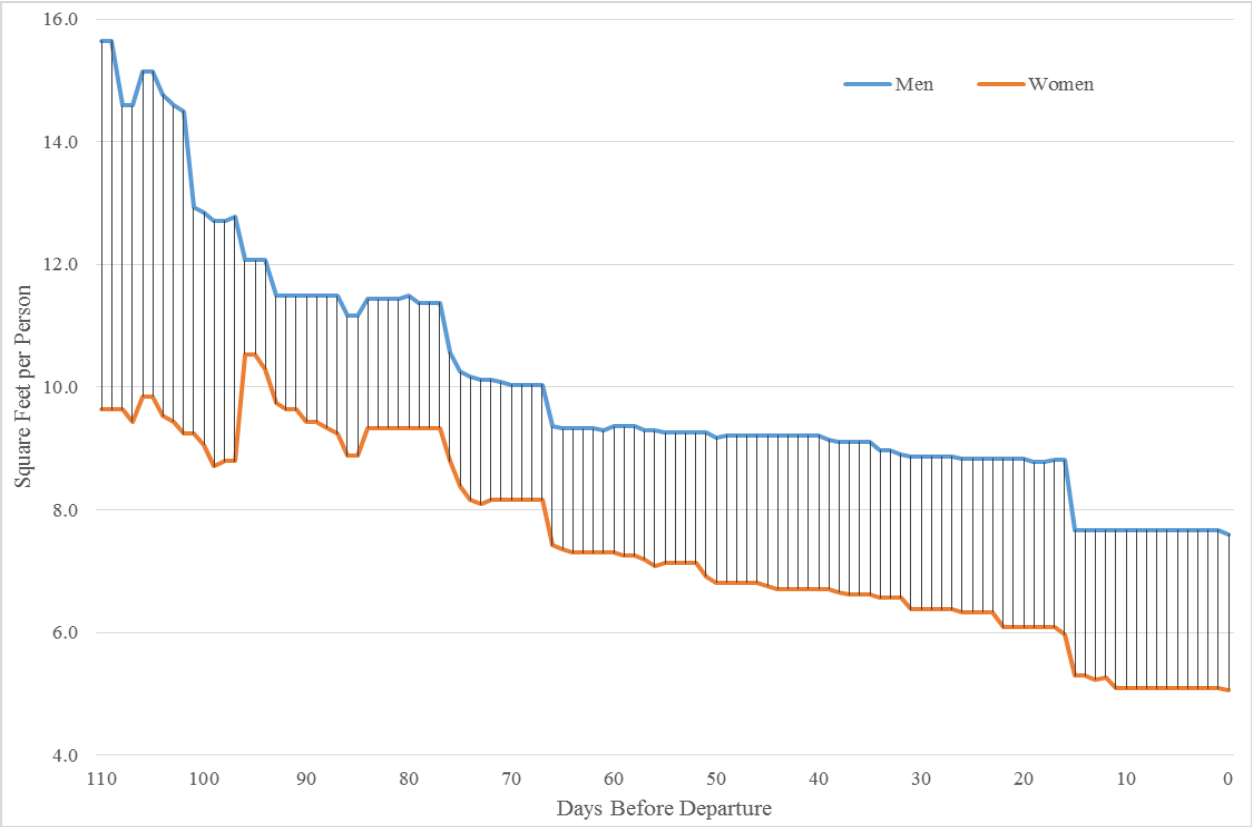
with a "naked cutlass" and "officiate[d] as porter to the door," by only allowing crewmen to pass through to the quarter-deck, as Smeathman witnessed.[133]

Ship became increasingly crowded as the captain continued to purchase enslaved people over a several-month period. The trading accounts of the *Golden Age* and *Jane,* two ships that traded in 1792/3 show, for the first time, how this process worked.[134] The *Golden Age* anchored at Whydah, in the Bight of Benin, on August 15, 1792 and, by December 31 (110 days before leaving the coast), the captain had purchased 152 males and 92 females. Although the captain had purchased significantly more men, the women were more crowded because the room that they were imprisoned in was almost half the size of the men's; on December 31, each woman had 9'7" square, while the men slept in spaces measuring 15'7" square (Figure 3.7). Over the next 109 days, the captain purchased an additional 161 men and 85 women, increasingly crowding the rooms. In the two months before the *Golden Age* left the coast, the Africans were crammed into thronged rooms in which they could barely lie on their backs; two weeks before departing the coast the Africans were so crowded that they were likely forced onto their sides and unable to move. The records of the *Jane,* which embarked 385 people at Bonny between December 1792 and February 1793, reveals a similar pattern (Figure 3.8). On December 17, 1792, 73 days before the *Jane* departed Bonny, the captain had purchased 100 men and boys, and 72 women and girls, who slept in spaces measuring 13' square and 12' square respectively. Prior to departing from the coast on February 28, 1793, the captain purchased another 118 men and

[133] For the two sentries and deck chains, see, Logbook of the *Crescent,* June 11, 1789, HCA16/83, TNAUK. For the deck-chain, see also, Coleman ed., Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," pp.141-42.
[134] Parry's measurement of the *Golden Age* and *Jane* are in "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK. The *Golden Age* was a Spanish prize taken off Jamaica in 1783. She had three decks but nothing in Parry's report indicated that there were rooms for the slaves on the other deck. The *Jane* was built in Liverpool in 1766, and was originally named the *Mentor.* The records of slave purchases for both ships are in *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*, 1794.

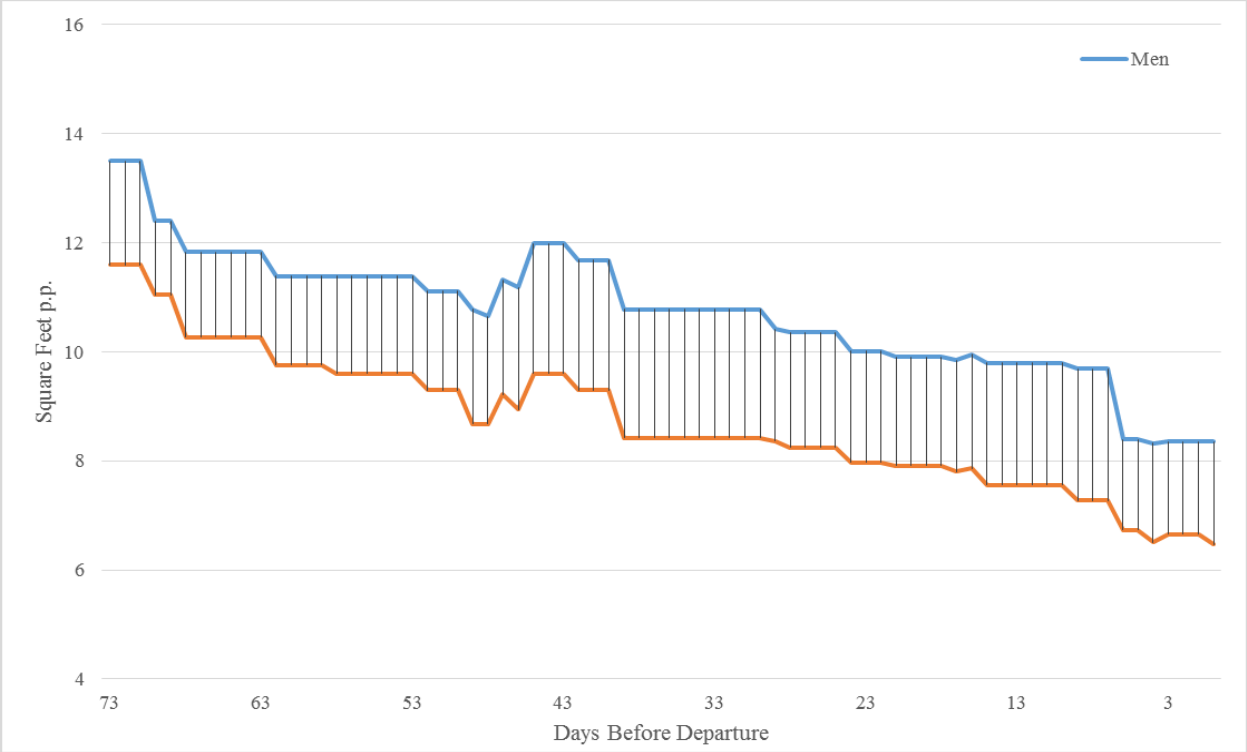
109 women, progressively reducing the space available to each person. Crowding became acute on slave ships at least two months before a ship left the coast of Africa.

Figure 3.7: Area in square feet per enslaved man and woman, Ship *Golden Age,* prior to its departure from the African coast, January 1-April 20, 1793



Source: "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK; Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record,* 1794. The decreases in the crowding are people who were either "sent on shore," having been returned by the captain, or sold to other ships. Prior to December 31 (110 days before departure) the men had more than 35' square each.

Figure 3.8: Area in square feet per enslaved man and woman, Ship *Jane,* prior to its departure from the African coast, December 17, 1792-February 28, 1793



***Source**:* "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK; Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office,* 1794. 41 captives (23 men and 18 women) were either "Transported to another ship," or "Discharged & sent ashore"—that is returned to the brokers—during the purchase, hence the decrease in crowding at certain points. Prior to December 1st (89 days before departure) each man and woman had more than 30' square.

Men consistently had more space than women on both the *Golden Age* and the *Jane*, even when women's comparatively smaller stature is taken into account. Parry's measurements of five vessels also reveals clear variations in the amount of room available to captives in different parts of the ship (Table 3.2). On the *Bud,* for example, the enslaved men slept in spaces measuring 12' square; the women and girls on the same vessel occupied spaces of just under 4' square. Women and girls had consistently smaller space allocations than the men on all but one of the sampled voyages. Only on the *Brooks'* voyage did the men have noticeably less space than the women, probably because the captain purchased many more adult males than was typical on voyages to the Gold Coast.

Table 3.2: Space Allocated to Enslaved Africans on five different ships (square feet), 1787/8

Ship Name	Slaves Embarked (Number)			Area of Rooms (Sq. Ft)			Area Per Person (Sq. Ft)		
	Men	Boys	Women & Girls	Men's	Boy's	Women's	Men	Boys	Women & Girls
Bud	67	56	77	840	165	298	12.5	2.9	3.9
Venus	87	56	157	625	308	600	7.2	5.5	3.8
Rose	124	83	133	986	431	503	8.0	5.2	3.8
Brooks	351	90	168	1717	509	998	4.9	5.7	5.9
Brothers	353	2	272	1716	558	581	4.9	279.0	2.1

Source: "Dimensions Of The Following Ships in the Part of Liverpool, employed in the African Slave Trade," 1788, BT6/7, TNAUK; Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record*, 1794.

Method: Data on the other four vessels measured by Parry is not available because neither Parry's report, nor the *TSTD,* included information on the numbers of men, women, and children embarked on the vessels.

The consistent differences in the spaces allocated to men and women stemmed from the ways in which men and women were treated on slave ships. Because men were shackled together at their ankles and wrists, two men could not be pressed tightly together unless they had their shackles removed, something that captains were loath to do; as Thomas Trotter, the surgeon of the *Brooks* noted of its 1783 voyage, only the slaves who were "out of irons" could be squeezed together. Europeans had few scruples about packing together unshackled women and children. The women's room was also particularly poorly ventilated because of its position under the quarter deck and behind the barricado, which prevented air from flowing into the raised gratings. From the "dreadful inconveniencies" that the women experienced, one visitor to a slave ship recalled, and their "lamentable cries" could be heard all night.[135]

[135] Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.84. Coleman ed., Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," p.145.

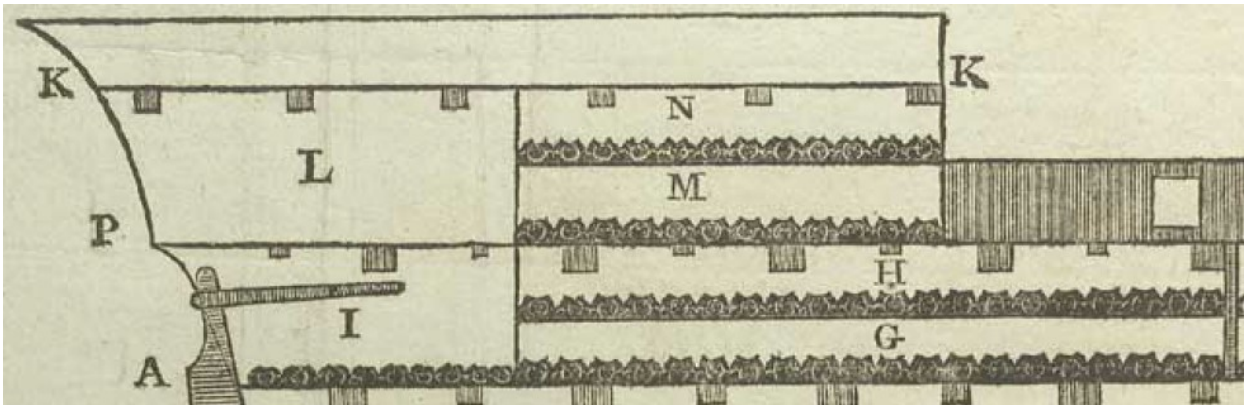
Crowding became particularly acute shortly before a ship's departure from Africa because captains tried to "shove in" groups of slaves "to make up" their "compliment," as one captain admitted to Richard Miles in 1776. To force in the last groups of people, ship surgeon William James told Parliament, the captain sent the "chief mate, boatswain, and an active man" below decks to "stow and pack" the captives together every night by "adjusting their arms and legs, and prescribing a fixed place for each." James Morley, who worked as a mate on numerous slave ships in the 1760s, performed this task himself and ensured that the slaves were "as close as possible that I could put them." "[T]hose which did not get quickly into their places" were, Trotter remembered, "compelled by the cat [whip]." Any new arrivals consequently caused bitter arguments between the slaves, as the meagre space assigned to each person was further reduced. As one slave ship sailor wrote of his voyage to the Benin in the 1760s, when a "boat-load of captives" were brought to the vessel "just before we left the coast" the captives who were already "packed together to a degree of pain" had to make room and "much noise ensued."[136]

Because captains could not adjust the layout of the rooms below deck once the partitions and platforms had been constructed, they moved slaves, and especially children, around the ship to make room for newcomers. When the *Ranger* sailed to the Gold Coast in 1790, for example, the captain purchased just fifteen enslaved boys and a portion of the 103 men were made to sleep in the boys' room. When there were, as Liverpudlian Captain Robert Norris stated, "full-grown Men Slaves enough" to "fill their own Room, and the Room allotted to the Boys" then the boys were "moved" out of their room, and that "Space is given to the Men." Crewmen put enslaved girls into the gun-room, a space immediately behind the women's room, where the ship's rudder

[136] Captain William Thoburn to Richard Miles, Annamaboe, October 22, 1776, CMTA, T70/1534, TNAUK. Testimony of William James, *Report of the Lords,* p.137. Testimony of James Morley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.157. Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.84. James Field Stanfield, *Observations on a Guinea Voyage, In a Series of Letters Addressed to the Rev. Thomas Clarkson* (London, 1788), p.32.

swung back and forth (Figure 3.9). Once there were, Norris continued, a "sufficient Number of grown Slaves [adults] on Board to occupy" the rooms below deck, then the crew moved all of the children above deck. It was the "Custom of Liverpool," Norris added, to have a "Number of small Slaves" on the deck "with a Sail to cover them," during the voyage; on rainy days, the children went "down into the Cabin." All but the smallest vessels had a half-deck, a covered space that ran from the end of the captain's cabin to near the main mast. Ordinarily, the crew hung their hammocks under the half-deck, but they were made to sleep alongside the slaves or turned out onto the main deck if the captain wanted to use that space for slaves instead. Substantial numbers of enslaved children spent the voyage above deck: Norris had fifty children in the cabin on his voyages, and a passenger on a slave ship from the Windward Coast at the end of the eighteenth century slept above twenty-five "little girls" in the cabin; the adjacent half-deck held twenty-nine boys, alongside the surgeon and the first mate.[137]

Figure 3.9: Cross section of the *Brooks* showing the half deck (N & M), cabin (L), and gun-room (I), 1789



***Source**: Description of a Slave Ship [Brooks]* (London, 1789)

[137] Six days after the *Ranger* left the Gold Coast, the captain wrote in his log that "A man slave that slept in the Boys room endeavoured to cut his throat with a knife or some other instrument and at day light when the Hatch was taken off to get ye Tubs the said Slave came upon Deck and jumped overboard but was picked up with the Boat and is in a fair way of recovery" (Logbook of the *Ranger*, July 7, 1790, 387.MD.56, LRO). Testimony of Robert Norris in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, pp.16. John Riland, *Memoirs of a West-India Planter* (London, 1827), p.51. For children in the cabin, see also, Testimony of Archibald Dalzell in Ibid., p.29; Testimony of John Matthews in Ibid., p.42; Testimony of John Knox in Ibid., p.75.

Captains also erected temporary structures above deck upon which enslaved children slept. Captain Norris' ships had an extra platform built for the boys in the booms of his ships—that is several spare masts laid parallel with, and 6' above, the main deck. By placing boards between the booms, a space of about 5', Norris created a temporary deck upon which "a double Range" of "small boys" slept with their "Feet and Legs" under the booms, presumably to prevent them tumbling off the platform as the ship rolled at sea. Other captains made children sleep in the ship's boat, which was either suspended over the middle of the main deck, or hung off the side of the ship. On the ship *Nightingale,* which traded at New Calabar in 1769, the captain put "30 of the boys" in the long boat for the duration of the Middle Passage. The boys "messed" there and "slept there too" because there was "not room below for them." Captains occasionally tried to purchase children as they neared the completion of their purchase precisely because they could be put into ancillary rooms and extra spaces. Captain Charles, of the slave ship *Africa,* told Richard Miles in 1776, for example, that his ship was "filling fast" but he still had 140 people to "stuff" into his ship to reach his compliment of slaves. The *Africa* had no platforms in the rooms, and so Charles thought that the rooms would be "well stuffed" once six hundred people were aboard. Even so, Charles wanted to purchase forty boys from Miles just as the ship was about to leave the coast, who he would put in the boat, which was suspended on the booms, and covered with a sail. Moving the children above would ensure, Charles claimed, that the adults would not be packed "like herrings in a cask" and "sweated to death" in the rooms. In reality, moving children into different parts of the ship enabled captains to purchase their full "compliment" of slaves who would then be crowded into every section of the ship.[138]

[138] Testimony of Robert Norris in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, pp.16-7. Testimony of Henry Ellison in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.366. Captain James Charles to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, November 4, 1783, CMTA, T70/1549/1, TNAUK. Captain William Thoburn, who traded on the Gold Coast in the same period as Charles,

New data from the Liverpool Registers demonstrates the extreme crowding that enslaved people suffered by the time they departed the African coast. Between 1782 and 1808 Liverpool captains typically crammed Africans into a space measuring 7'3" square for the duration of the Middle Passage (Figure 3.10). To put that figure into perspective, the *Brooks* image depicts men with 9'5" square per person, women with 8'1" square each; and boys in spaces of 7'6" square. Enslaved people forcibly transported on British slave ships in the period 1782 to 1808 were, then, typically much more crowded than the *Brooks* diagram depicts. This average masks considerable variation, however. Captives typically squeezed into spaces between 5' and 6'6" square until the passage of Dolben's Act in 1788, which reduced crowding by restricting the number of slaves that a ship could carry according to its tonnage. After 1792, slave trading merchants effectively circumvented the Dolben Act's regulations by subtly modifying their vessels to increase their tonnage, without materially increasing the amount of space allocated to the Africans. Crowding did not reduce significantly until 1799, when Parliament passed an act mandating that ships could carry only one slave for every 8' square of the area between decks; the act also required that the decks had to be at least 5' high. After 1800, when ships fitted out after the 1799 act began to sail, captives had more than 8' square—the degree of crowding depicted in the *Brooks* diagram.[139]

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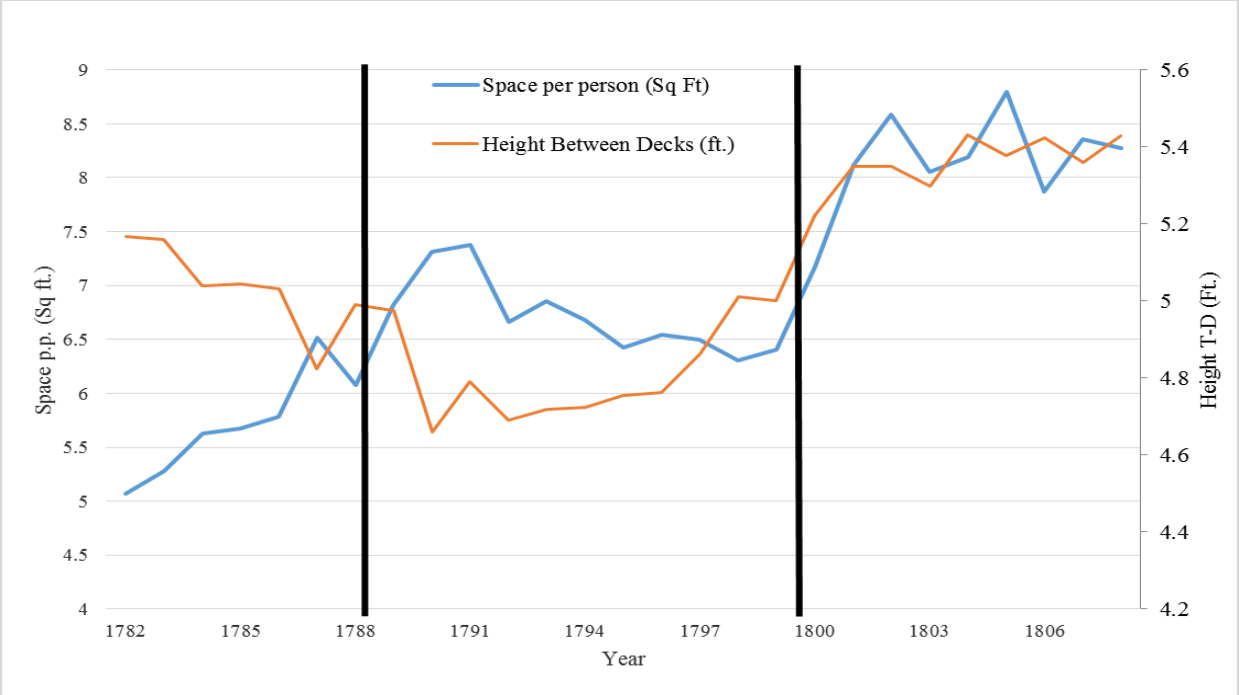
likewise told Miles that he only had "Room for small slaves" aboard his ship as it neared departure from the coast (Captain William Thoburn to Richard Miles, Cape Coast Castle, August 2, 1783, CMTA, T70/1549/1, TNAUK).

[139] The owners of the *Jane*, for example, lengthened the vessel in 1791 by just six inches, increasing her tonnage from 242 to 269, and the number of captives who could be legally carried from 376 to 403. The 357 Africans who were embarked on the Jane in 1789 therefore had 10.5' square; the 403 people who embarked on the subtly modified vessel a year later had 9.3' square. Every other vessel surveyed by Parry was likewise lengthened or broadened in the period 1789-1794, reflecting the widespread modification of the British slaving fleet to circumvent regulations. "An Act for regulating the Height between Decks of Vessels entered outwards for the Purpose of carrying Slaves from the Coast of Africa," July 19, 1797, Anno tricesimo septimo Georgii III. Cap. CXVIII. "An Act for better regulating the Manner of carrying Slaves, in British Vessels, from the Coast of Africa," July 12, 1799, Anno tricesimo nono Georgii III. Cap. LXXX.

Figure 3.10: Average space per enslaved African (square feet), 1782-1808 (n=2,013)



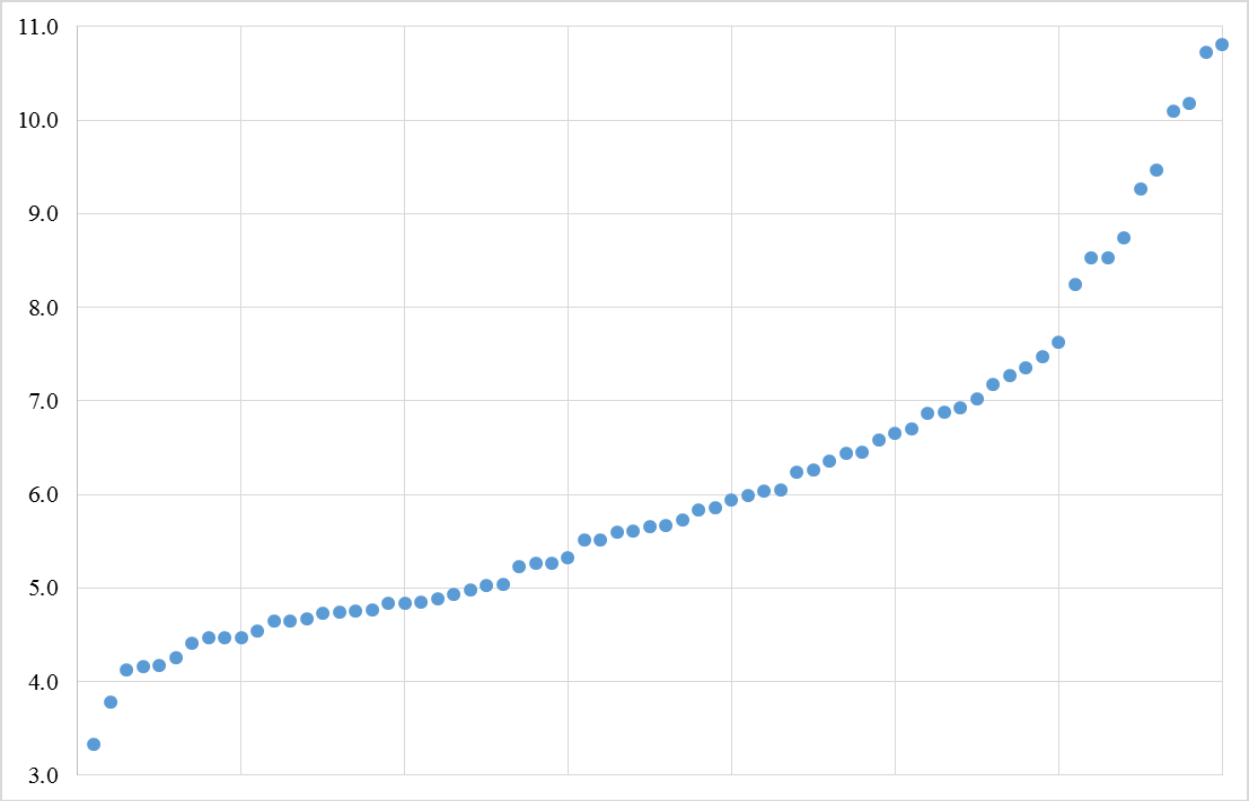
Source: Liverpool Registers Database

Note: The black lines mark the passage of regulatory acts: Dolben's Act, August 1, 1788; "An Act for better regulating the Manner of carrying Slaves," July 12, 1799. Because the acts only applied to slave ships being fitted out, their effects typically were not noticeable until one or two years after their passage.

Annual trends also cloak considerable variety in the level of crowding of individual voyages. In 1788, for example, just before the Dolben Act took effect, Liverpool slave ships undertook seventy voyages to Africa (Figure 3.11). On twenty-six voyages, the Africans were packed into spaces of five square feet or less; on twenty-nine voyages, between five and six square feet; and on the remaining fifteen voyages each person had six square feet or more. The gap between the extremes was substantial. On the ship *Banastre*, which traded on the Gold Coast, 359 captives were packed together with just 3'4" square each; on the *Garland*, which traded at Bonny, an equal number of people lay in berths measuring 10'8" square. While the majority of enslaved Africans were crammed into spaces of between 4' and 6' square before the

passage of regulations, significant numbers of captives were packed to either a greater or lesser degree depending on the particular circumstances of the slaving voyage.

Figure 3.11: Crowding on seventy slaving voyages (square feet), 1788



Source: Liverpool Registers Database

The wide disparity in crowding between voyages stemmed from the vagaries of the slave trade on the African coast, not the altruism of particular slave ship captains. Slave traders sent their vessels out with "an assorted Cargo" with which the captain was meant to "purchase as near" the ship's "compliment" of slaves "as he can," as James Jones explained.[140] Once a ship arrived on the coast, however, the captain's plans to purchase a specific number of Africans of a particular age and gender often went awry, either because of a shortage of captives arriving from the interior, or problems with the trading assortment. Even when enslaved people arrived in large

[140] Testimony of James Jones in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.44.

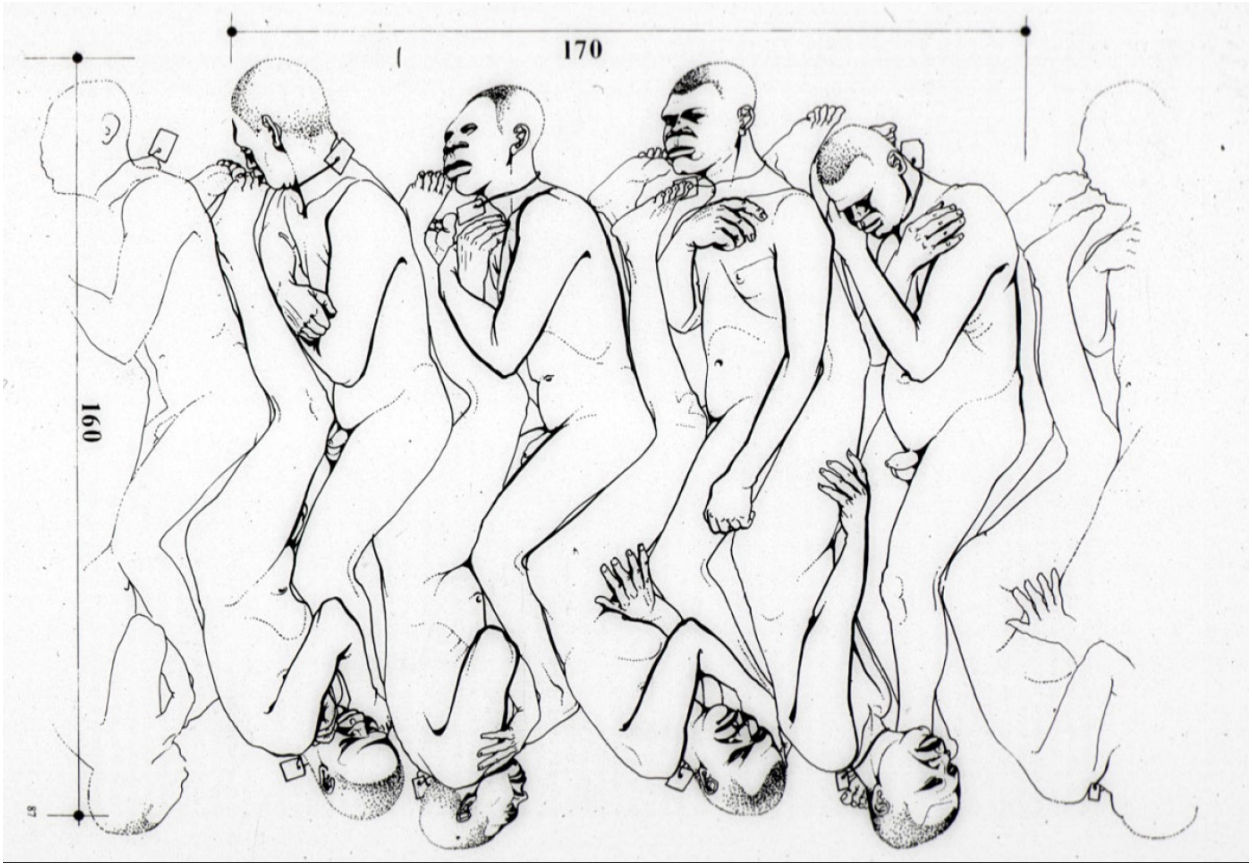
numbers the captains could not always purchase them because their assortment might not meet the demands of the African brokers. As a result, commanders of slave ships might fail to complete their "compliment" of slaves, giving their prisoners comparatively larger amounts of room than had been anticipated. As one slave ship officer put it, Africans had "more room" only if the captain made a "short purchase" or if a large number of the captives perished.[141]

Conversely, when Africans could be obtained for low prices on the coast—particularly during wartime downturns—captains mercilessly squeezed them into their ships. As John Knox, who served as surgeon on the *Tartar* in 1782 explained, the disruptions caused by the American Revolutionary War meant that Europeans could obtain "plenty of Slaves at a very moderate price." There was therefore an "opportunity of sometimes crowding the ship too much." Knox was not exaggerating: captains crowded Africans into less than 5' square on thirty-three of the fifty-four voyages sampled in the period 1781-1784, and on the *Tartar,* the Africans had just 3.5' square. The cases of two similarly crowded voyages in the same period reveals how Africans experienced these terrible conditions. In June 1782, Liverpool firm Baker & Dawson sent the *Mosley Hill* to Bonny, where the captain, John Hewan, made what Falconbridge called an "extraordinary purchase" of 797 people because he found slaves "remarkably cheap from the dullness of trade." Hewan forced the Africans into spaces of just 3'8" square per person. There was, Falconbridge stated, "no interval of room between their bodies" and they "suffered so much" that there was "nothing but shrieking and yelling the whole night." A year later, the *Juba's* captain bought 735 people at Bonny in less than a month, fifty-three of whom he left with King Pepple for collection on a later voyage because they could not be crammed aboard the ship. The 682 people who boarded the vessel were so crowded, Falconbridge later wrote, that they

[141] Testimony of James Morley in Clarkson, *Substance,* p.75.

were "even obliged to lie one upon another." At that level of crowding the Africans would have been "locked spoonways," to use the technical term used in the trade—that is pushed onto their sides and squeezed together into each other's' arms, a position from which they could not move (Figure 3.12). Merchants no doubt crowded their ships in similar periods, such as the Wars of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and Seven Years' War (1755-1763), when the slave trade experienced a similar collapse.[142]

Figure 3.12: Crowding at 3'9" square per person



Source: Jean Boudriot, *Traite Negrier L'Aurore* (Paris, 1984). This shows eight men in a space measuring 1.7mx1.6m, which equals 5.8'x 5.4' (30' square)—3'9" square per person. Boudriot, a

[142] Testimony of John Knox in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.88. Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in Clarkson, *Substance,* p.131. Falconbridge, *Account,* pp.33-34. For the *Juba,* see also, John & Thomas Hodgson to Richard Miles, Liverpool, October 14, 1783, T70/1549/1, TNAUK. For the collapse of the slave trade during the American Revolutionary War, see, Nicholas Radburn, "Keeping 'the Wheel in Motion': Trans-Atlantic Credit Terms, Slave Prices, and the Geography of Slavery in the British Americas, 1755–1807," *The Journal of Economic History* 75, no. 03 (September 2015), pp.660–89. For the concept of locking "spoonways," see, Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.84.

ship modeler, drew this image based on detailed measurements that he took from the plans of the French ship *Aurore,* which embarked 523 Africans at Angola in 1784. The tags around the slaves' necks record their number, which was assigned to them sequentially when they boarded the vessel.

In the absence of regulations—the situation for almost the entire history of the British slave trade—captains therefore packed enslaved people tightly on their slaving vessels whenever they could. Evidence from sailors and captains vividly captures what this meant for the Africans. John Newton wrote that the slaves were forced to lay "close to each other, like books upon a shelf" during his three voyages in the period 1750 to 1755. James Towne, who made two voyages to the Windward Coast in 1760/1 and 1767/8, testified that the Africans on both ships were "exceedingly crowded… one upon another" and they could not "lie on their backs" stretch out to "full length," or "change their posture with ease." The decks were so cramped that they "would not, easily, contain one more" person. James Morley, a sailor who made six voyages to Africa on different ships, and to different ports, between 1760 and 1776, told Parliament that the slaves were "stowed so close" on all of his voyages they had "scarcely room to do more than lie upon their sides." The Africans seldom had "12 inch or more in breadth" to lie in, a figure that equates to a space of about 5'6" square—the typical degree of crowding before the passage of regulations.[143]

Temperature soared below decks in these crowded spaces while the ship was anchored on the African coast. When Captain Samuel Gamble took a temperature reading at Sierra Leone in July 1793, for example, he found it to be "from 98 to 100" on the deck, and "106 if hanging up in the Cabbin" of his ship *Sandown.* John Newton, commander of the *African,* wrote in his log in August 1752, that it was 78F in the shaded portion of the deck, but 100F "in the heat of the sun

[143] Testimony of James Morley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.157; Clarkson, *Substance,* p.75. Testimony of James Towne in Clarkson, *Substance,* p.52. Newton, *Thoughts,* p.32. Henry Millar, who sailed to Old Calabar in the 1760s, stated that the Africans were packed so closely that they "there was not room to put down the point of a stick between one another" (Testimony of Henry Millar in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.388).

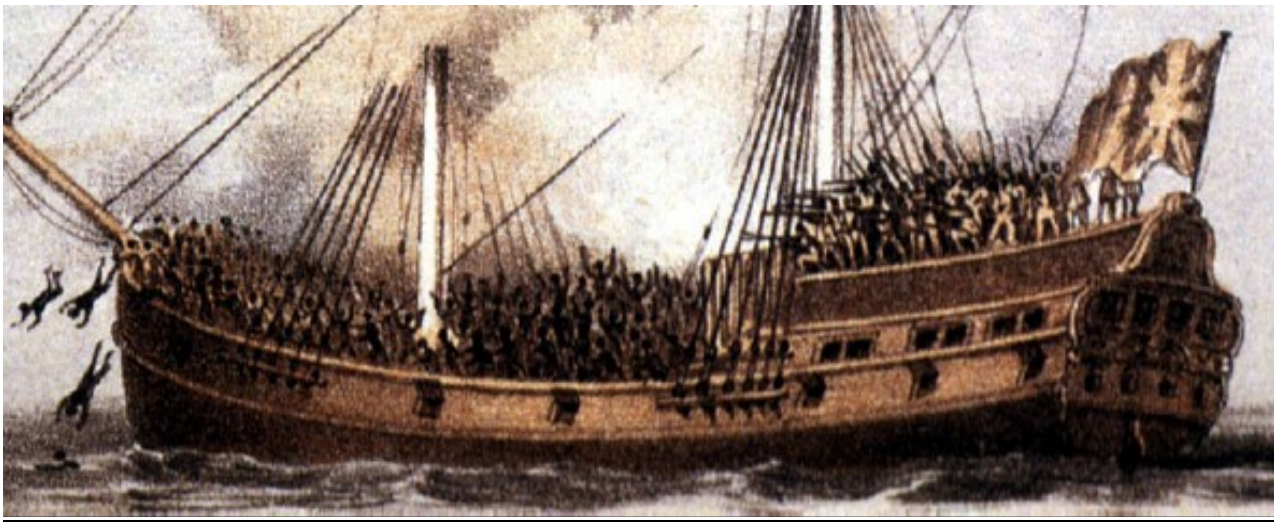
at noon." Throughout the rainy season, which ran from May through September on much of the coast, heavy rainfall made the air oppressive and humid. Ships visiting the Windward Coast, Sierra Leone, and the eastern Bight of Biafra, in particular, encountered incessant deluges for much of the year. During the dry season between November and March, by contrast, the temperature remained high, but the scant rain brought little relief. The heat generated by several hundred people soon raised the temperature to a dangerous level; captives were "bathed in sweat," and the rooms became so steamy that they appeared as if "water had been thrown over them"[144] Enslaved Africans endured this daily misery for several months before the ship departed from the coast.

Africans were also crushed together tightly on the deck during the day. Although people were standing the space available to them was significantly reduced by the tackle, yards, ropes, cannon, wheels, furnaces and toilets on the deck which were, as the abolitionists wrote in their description of the *Brooks,* "piled upon the upper deck." Take, for example, the ship *Jane*, a vessel that Parry measured and found to be 102 feet long and 24.5 feet wide, a deck space of 2,500' square. The raised gratings; 11' square cauldron that was used to cook the slaves' food; three foot wheel; and four toilets, each of which measured 6' square, reduced the space by about 250 feet to 2,250. In 1788, the year that Parry measured the ship, 530 Africans had 4.25' square to stand in on the *Jane's* deck, a dense crush of people that must have swayed and surged with the rolling of the vessel on the sea. Yet the 1788 voyage was not the most crowded: in 1786, 574 captives crammed aboard the *Jane* (4' square per person.); in 1785, 590 Africans (3.8' square per person); and in 1781, 677 people (3.32' square p.p). A contemporary illustration of an

[144] Mouser, ed., *Log of the Sandown*, p.51. Logbook of the *African*, August 25, 1752, LOG/M/46, NMM. For rainfall patterns in the principal African slaving ports, see, Stephen D. Behrendt, "Ecology, Seasonality," pp.44–85. Clarkson, *Substance,* p.52, p.69.

insurrection aboard a slave ship depicts what the deck of the *Jane* may have looked like at that level of crowding (Figure 3.13). James Irving, who served as mate on the *Jane's* voyage in 1786, was not exaggerating when he said that he was "almost Melted" in the "Midst" of the Africans on deck.[145]

Figure 3.13: Insurrection aboard a slave ship, Sierra Leone, c.1794



Source: William Fox, *A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the West Coast of Africa* (London, 1851), facing p. 116. Based on a black and white image in Carl B. Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization, particularly applied to the Western coast of Africa... in Two Parts* (London, 1794).

Enslaved people were thus incredibly crowded on slave ships long before they were taken from the African coast and then at sea. Captains employed a number of strategies to achieve this level of crowding. They initially put enslaved children below decks with adults, but then moved them into rooms above and below decks and onto temporary structures in the rigging. In doing so, they freed up small amounts of space in the rooms into which enslaved adults could be squeezed. As a result, men, women and children experienced their imprisonment on the African coast very differently. Men were shackled together for the duration of their imprisonment, and

[145] *Description of a Slave Ship [the Brooks]* (London, 1789). James Irving to Mary Irving, Tobago, December 2, 1786 in Suzanne Schwarz, *Slave Captain: The Career of James Irving in the Liverpool Slave Trade* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), p.87.

could barely move position either above or below deck because of their restraints. Because they were unshackled, the crew packed women together more tightly than the men in poorly ventilated rooms at the aft of the shift. Children were not always squeezed into the crowded rooms below deck, and instead slept either on the deck, or in the cabin or half-deck, comparatively airy spaces. The children's' health was "preserved" compared to the adults, the surgeon of the *Brooks* wrote*,* because they were not shackled, and were "allowed to run about the deck, and occasionally assist in the duty of the ship." Archibald Monteith, an enslaved boy who was taken away from Old Calabar in the 1800s, captured what this relative degree of freedom meant for enslaved children on slaving vessels in his memoirs. Monteith was put in the captain's cabin with eleven other boys where, he remembered, he had room to move and could eat from the captain's table. The fate of the enslaved men and women was terrible by comparison: at night Monteith could hear their "heartrending cries of anguish" from the steaming rooms below deck.[146]

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Historians have debated at length whether ship crowding caused the deaths of enslaved Africans on their passage to the Americas and have produced an enormous quantity of research on the question. Almost without exception historians have found little or no correlation between crowding and slave mortality. The most important variables dictating slave mortality were, they have found, the length of the passage, the disease environment aboard ships, and the regional origins of enslaved people, which determined whether captives arrived aboard the ship in good or bad health. All but one of these studies has, however, used tonnage as a measure of the size of

[146] Thomas Trotter, *Observations on the Scurvy: With a Review of the Theories Lately Advanced on That Disease ; and the Opinions of Dr Milman Refuted from Practice* (London, 1786), p.63. Archibald John Monteith, "Archibald John Monteith: Native Helper and Assistant in the Jamaica Mission at New Carmel," *Callaloo,* 13, 1 (Winter, 1990), p.114.

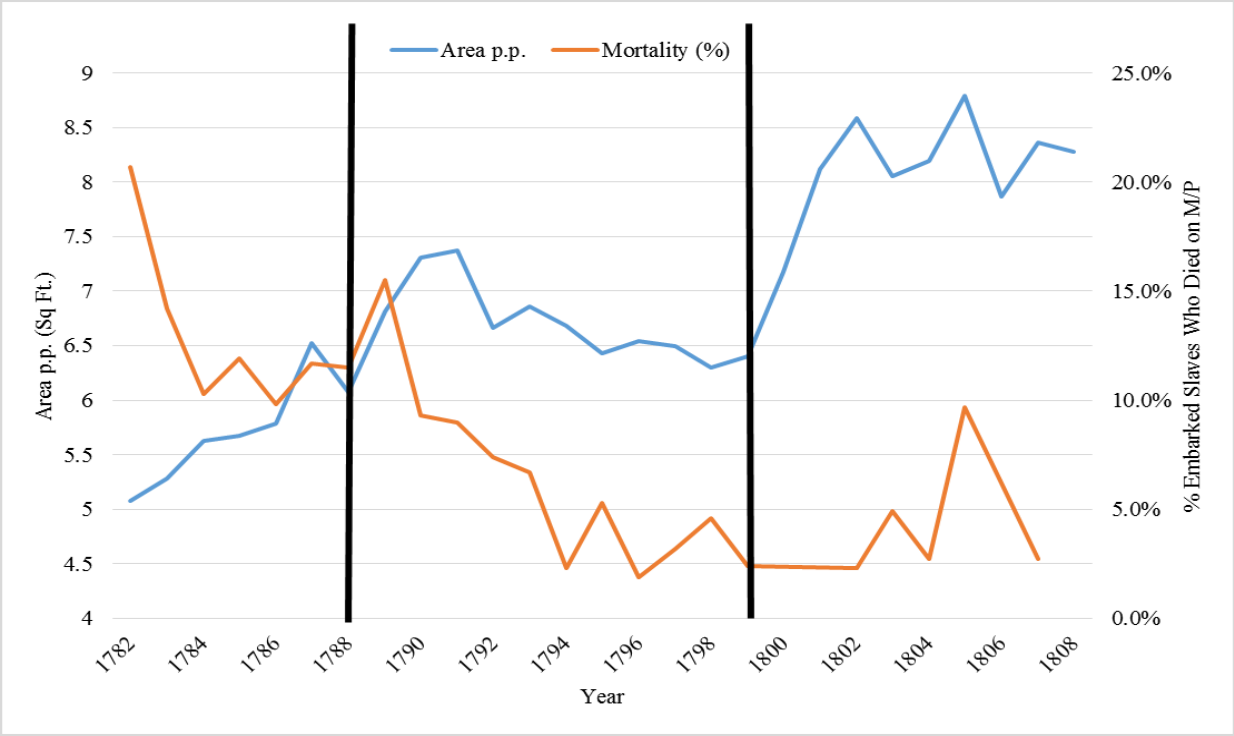
slaving vessels. The Liverpool Registers can therefore cast new light on the link between crowding and mortality, but also the effects of crowding on the health of the survivors who disembarked in the Americas, a subject that historians have comparatively neglected.[147]

The Liverpool ship registers show a marked relationship between crowding and mortality (Figure 3.14). In 1782, death rates were high when slave ships were densely packed. Between 1783 and 1787, mortality remained at more than ten percent even as the space per person increased somewhat—from around 5' square to 6' square. The passage of Dolben's Act in 1788 coincided with a significant fall in mortality, from around twelve percent to just five percent. At first glance, the reduction in crowding brought about by the Dolben Act appears minimal: from 6' square to 7' square between 1788 and 1791; and then to just 6'6" square between 1791 and 1800. However, the Act did result in a significant reduction in the number of voyages upon which enslaved people were extreme extremely crowded, voyages upon which the Africans had less than 5' square per person. Prior to the passage of the Dolben Act, enslaved people were packed into spaces measuring 5' square or less on forty-three percent of the sampled voyages; less than one in twenty of the vessels sailing after the passage of Dolben's Act were crowded to

[147] For recent works on slave mortality, see, Herbert S. Klein, "The Middle Passage," in *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York, 1999), pp.130–60; Robin Haines, John McDonald, and Ralph Shlomowitz, "Mortality and Voyage Length in the Middle Passage Revisited," *Explorations in Economic History* 38, no. 4 (October 2001), pp.503–33; Herbert S. Klein et al., "Transoceanic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001), pp.93–118; Sowande Mustakeem, "'I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before': Diet, Disease, and Mortality in 18th-Century Atlantic Slaving Voyages," *Journal of African American History* 93, no. 4 (Fall 2008), pp.474–96; Johannes Postma, "The Slaves: Their Treatment and Mortality," in *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.227–58; Nicolas J. Duquette, "Revealing the Relationship Between Ship Crowding and Slave Mortality," *The Journal of Economic History* 74, no. 02 (June 2014): 535–52. Herbert Klein and Charles Garland are the only historians to have used the actual dimensions of slave ships, as opposed to tonnage, to measure crowding and mortality. In 1985, they examined a list of fifty Liverpool, London and Bristol ships sent by pro-slavery activists to Lord Hawkesbury to illustrate that amount of room assigned to Africans on slaving voyages made in 1796/7. Klein and Garland found that each African had, on average, 5'7" square for the voyage, although they did not explore what that might have meant for the captives. When they compared crowding to mortality they discovered no "significant relationship." (Charles Garland and Herbert S. Klein, "The Allotment of Space for Slaves Aboard Eighteenth-Century British Slave Ships," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1985), pp.238–48).

the same degree.[148] A sample of 461 Liverpool-based ships reveals why this may have reduced slave mortality so substantially (Figure 3.15). A quarter of the captives jammed into spaces smaller than 4' square died; and a sixth of the Africans who Europeans packed into spaces of 4' or 5' square also perished. On vessels where the captives had more than 5' square, mortality rates were just over five percent. When ship crowding is measured accurately, a clear relationship to African mortality is evident.

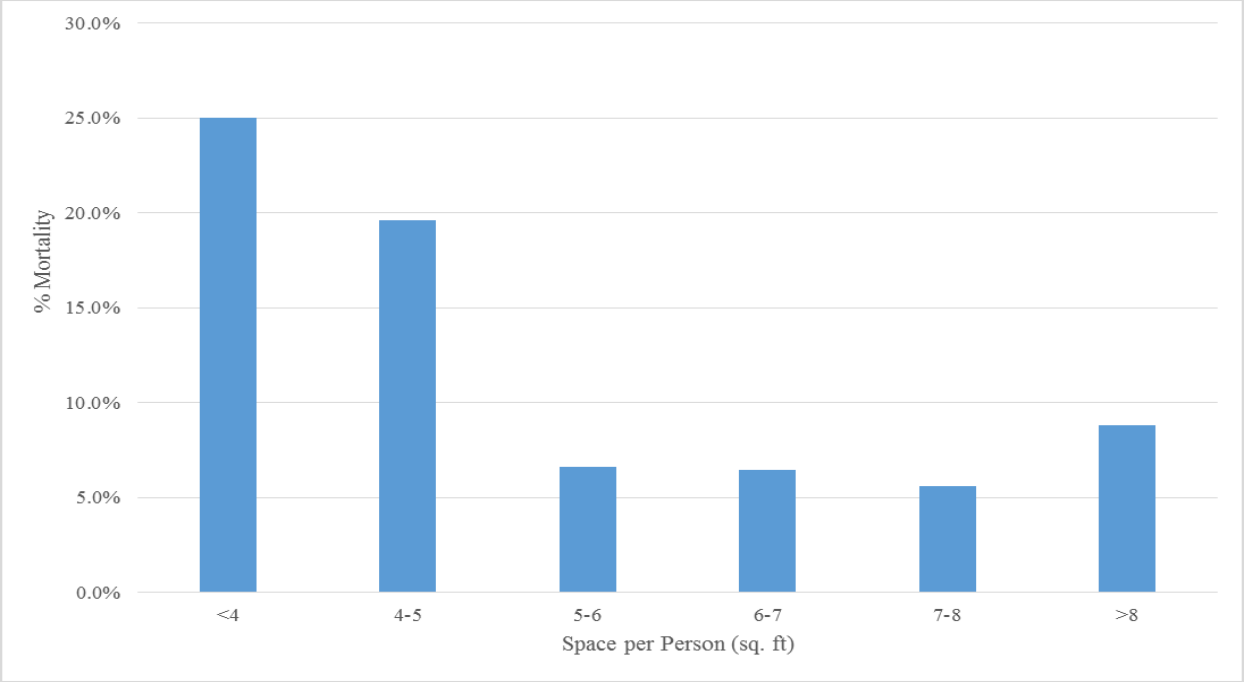
Figure 3.14: Area per enslaved person (Square Feet) vs. Mortality, 1782-1808 (n=461)



Source: Liverpool Registers Database. Mortality rates were not available for the other voyages documented in the Liverpool registers. The black lines mark the passage of Dolben's Act in 1788 and the Regulatory Act of 1799.

[148] Haines and Shlomowitz argue that the "steady mortality decline on British ships may be largely attributable to the sophisticated understanding of the transmission of disease shared by reformers in the prison, convict, and hospital services." While an intriguing explanation for explaining the decline of mortality over the course of the eighteenth century, their thesis is less useful for describing the rapid drop in mortality immediately after the passage of Dolben's Act (Robin Haines and Ralph Shlomowitz, "Explaining the Mortality Decline in the Eighteenth-Century British Slave Trade," *Economic History Review* 53, no. 2 (May 2000), pp.262–83).

Figure 3.15: Area per enslaved person (square feet) and mortality (%), 1782-1808 (n=461)



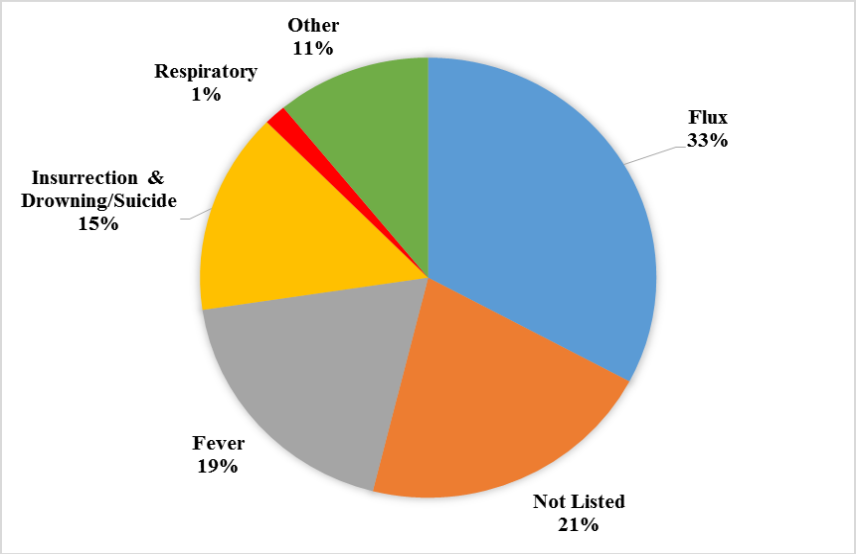
Source: Liverpool Registers Database; *TSTD.* Mortality rates were not available for the other voyages documented in the Liverpool registers.

As slave ship surgeons attested, Africans died of communicable diseases that were exacerbated by ship crowding (Figure 3.16). As part of the enquiries into the abolition of the slave trade Parliament mandated that surgeons had to keep a "bill of mortality" that recorded when and how enslaved people died. The lists for fifty-two voyages undertaken in 1793/4 provide information on the causes of death for 472 of 15,252 enslaved people who were purchased and embarked on slave ships. The logs reveal that enslaved Africans were much more likely to die at sea than on the coast: 128 of the 472 people, or twenty-seven percent of the total, died on the coast.[149] The fact that such a large proportion of captives died at sea is significant because it indicates that shipboard factors were the primary killers of enslaved people, not

[149] *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*, 1793/4. Extrapolating out this admittedly small sample to the British trade more generally increases the number of captives who died aboard British ships from 473,883 to 650,211. For the illnesses that afflicted Africans aboard the ships, see, Richard B. Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves: A Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.115-20.

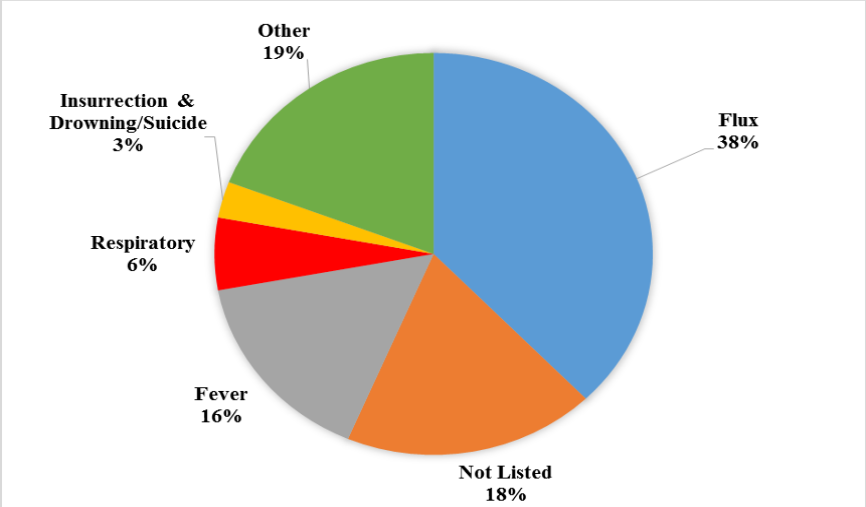
diseases that Africans brought with them onto the ship. “Fluxes” and “fevers” killed the vast majority of people on the coast. Deaths through drowning, either by leaping into the sea or as part of an organized insurrection, were the third largest causes of death, a result of the constant attempts by Africans to resist their enslavement on the coast. At sea, fevers and fluxes were once more the leading killers of enslaved people (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.16: Causes of deaths of 128 enslaved people, African coast, 1793/4



Source: Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*, 1794

Figure 3.17: Causes of death of 344 enslaved people, Middle Passage, 1793/4



Source: Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*, 1794

The routines on slave ships inadvertently promoted the spread of infectious diseases. Africans contracted "flux" from spring water, which was stored in dirty barrels and puncheons that had formerly been used to store trade goods.[150] Amoeba and bacteria bred in the barrels, which sat stagnant in the warm hold for several weeks. Once a person was infected, the amoeba caused violent diarrhea, abdominal swelling, weight loss, and dehydration; cysts grew inside the person and then exited the body in infectious bloody stools. Because Africans ate from communal bowls, diseases spread quickly. Enslaved people also had little opportunity to keep clean on the Middle Passage, further spreading disease. Slave ship captains told Parliament that they cleaned and fumigated the rooms "daily" when the slaves were above deck, but their logbooks tell a different story.[151] Crewmen were sent below just once a week to clear the blood, mucus, excrement, and vomit that accumulated on the bare wooden planks on which the slaves slept. As Falconbridge testified, washing the decks was not "permitted" on most slave ships, and so the crew merely "scraped the filth" into buckets, which they tossed over the side leaving germs and bacteria behind. Neither did the crew allow the slaves to frequently wash or shave. Eighteen days after the *Britannia* left Bonny in 1776, for example, the crew washed the slaves for the first time "with warm water," and two days later the crew were "Employed shaving ye Slaves." The captives were not washed again for another two weeks. The *Britannia's* captain was by no means unique in instituting such a lax cleaning regime: the extant logbooks of thirty

[150] As Robert Norris explained: "The Cargo to purchase these Negroes and Provisions are packed in as many Puncheons or Casks, that will make Water Casks" (Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.17). Samuel Robinson, who served as a boy sailor on a slave ship at the turn of the nineteenth century, said that the water was "black as ink" after "rotting in the cask" and it "smelt shockingly bad" (*A Sailor Boy's Experience Aboard a Slave Ship in the Beginning of the Present Century* (Hamilton, 1828), pp.57-8). An anonymous passenger on a slave ship in the 1790s said that the water casks were "badly cleansed" and so the water was "so putrid" that it still tasted rank after being boiled and infused with tea or coffee (Riland ed., *Memoirs,* p.61).

[151] See, for example, Testimony of James Penny in *Report of the Lords,* p.117.

British slave ships show that crewmen cleaned the slaves and their rooms just once every week, and frequently once every fortnigh, ideal conditions for "Fluxes" and "fevers" to spread.[152]

While lax cleaning regimes were the norm on slave ships, the chance of diseases spreading throughout the entire human cargo increased when vessels were especially crowded. Below decks, captives who were squeezed together contracted dysentery from their neighbors, especially when they could not reach the tubs by climbing over the packed bodies on the deck and had, instead, to "ease themselves as they lie," as Falconbridge euphemistically described it. When large numbers of captives contracted dysentery, the tubs overflowed with infectious excrement, flooding the decks where people were forced to lay packed together. Ordinarily, the surgeon designated the half-deck, fore-castle, and even the boy's room as a sick-bay, where enslaved Africans could be quarantined. On particularly crowded vessels, however, these spaces were given over to healthy captives, and so the sick had to lie with the healthy, increasing the risk of infection. During the 1788 voyage of the *Young Hero,* for example, 250 Biafran slaves were packed onto the vessel, giving each just 4.5' square; they were, the surgeon's mate noted, "only able to lay on their side." When flux broke out among the slaves, the crewmen put sickly slaves in the gun-room and the boy's room. The flux continued to spread until there were so many infected people that they could not be "confine[d] in those two places." The crew put "those that were diseased and those that were not, together," and, as a result "the epidemic disease spread more and more, and increased the mortality more than if it had been otherwise." By the time the *Young Hero* reached Trinidad, 118 of the 250 Africans had perished.[153]

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[152] Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 72, p.610. For examples of "scraping the rooms," see, for example, the logbooks of the *African,* May 29, 1753 LOG/M/46, NMM; *Glory,* July 31, 1771, HCA16/59. TNAUK. Logbook of the *Britannia,* November 11-January 1, 1776, Harlan Crow Library, Dallas, TX.

[153] Falconbridge, *Account,* p.26. For sick-bays, see, Ibid., p.35; Testimony of Robert Norris in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.5; Testimony of Archibald Dalzell in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 69, p.121; Testimony of Bowen in *Report of the*

Crowding was not, however, the only determinant of slave mortality on the Middle Passage. The length of the passage to the Americas was also crucial, because the chances of a disease breaking out and spreading through the captive cargo increased over time. The Atlantic crossing was significantly shorter from ports in Upper Guinea and Angola than in Lower Guinea: ships leaving Senegambia, for example, typically reached the Americas in just forty-seven days; vessels from the Bight of Benin spent almost twice as long at sea. Mortality rates correlate closely, but not uniformly, with the duration of the voyage (Figure 3.18). Enslaved people carried from the Windward Coast, for example, experienced lower mortality rates than slaves taken from Senegambia, even though passage times were longer. Moreover, captains spent almost twice as long purchasing slaves on the Windward Coast as their counterparts in Senegambia, so enslaved people spent significantly longer aboard slave ships in the former region. Africans departing the Bight of Biafra also suffered significantly higher mortality rates than captives leaving any other part of the African coast, despite the shorter voyage time—at least compared to the Gold Coast and especially the Bight of Benin.[154]

Lords., p.125; Testimony of James Arnold in Ibid., p.133; For the *Young Hero,* see, Testimony of Ecroyde Claxton in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, pp.32-3.

[154] *TSTD.* Ships leaving Upper Guinea and the Gold Coast steered south west towards the equator to hook directly onto the trade winds in the Atlantic; vessels coming out of ports in Lower Guinea travelled to Sao Tome or Principe, tracked along the equator, and then swung north to find the trade winds.

Figure 3.18: Average length of Middle Passage and average percentage of enslaved Africans who died on the voyage, 1640-1808

Source: Liverpool Registers Database; *TSTD:* 1640-1808.

Crowding thus substantially increased the risks that enslaved people would contract infectious diseases, and make it harder for people to survive those illnesses, especially on lengthy voyages. Crowding was, then, an important variable that historians need to reexamine using new sources if they want to understand why large numbers of enslaved people perished on the Middle Passage.

While historians have quantified the mortality of enslaved Africans on the Middle Passage they have paid relatively little attention to the voyage's effects on the health of the survivors. The paucity of research stems, in part, from a lack of sources: surgeons and captains recorded when enslaved people died, but not when they sickened and recovered. The unique medical log of the slave ship *Lord Stanley's* voyage from Liverpool to Angola offers, however, a

glimpse of the impact of the Middle Passage on African who sickened, but did not die. The *Lord Stanley* dropped anchor in Angola in March 1792 and, over the next three months, the captain purchased 393 men, women, and children. When the ship reached Grenada in June 1792, Christopher Bowes, the ship's surgeon, submitted his entire journal to the customs house. Bowes' journal included daily notations on the condition of sickly captives, beginning with their initial symptoms when they were brought to his attention, until he discharged them or they died. On June 12, 1792, for example, Bowes wrote that a man "complained of pains in the bowels with diarrhea," and noted the medicines that he prescribed. The next day, the man was "the same," and three days later he "had much pain and seemed to grow weaker." Four days after, the man was "very weak" and "at nite he died." Bowes also noted captives who survived their illness. On June 10, for instance, a man had diarrhea and was given the same treatment as his shipmate. The day that the other man died, the second man was "in a little pain," but then began to recover. By June 21, he was "pretty well" and Bowes discharged him.[155]

Significant numbers of captive Africans contracted illnesses aboard slave ships, but subsequently recovered. Of the 393 captives embarked on the *Lord Stanley,* thirty-eight fell ill and were admitted into the sick bay under Bowes' care—one in ten of the human cargo. Sixteen people died and twenty-two survived. There is seemingly no difference in the illnesses contracted by those who lived or died. Thirty-three of the sickly captives were admitted to the sick-bay with diarrhea, of whom thirteen perished. Another person died of chest pains, one of head pains (perhaps the result of dehydration), and one of "tremors;" two people who had chest pains survived. Captives typically died of flux quickly. Most initially had a "pain in the bowels" and "diarrhea" and then deteriorated and died within a week. Africans who survived the flux

[155] Medical Log of a slaver the Lord Stanley by Christopher Bowes, 1792, Royal College of Surgeons of England Library.

spent around two weeks recuperating, sometimes as long as a month. By the end of that near-death-experience they were "mere skeletons," as one slave ship surgeon observed. The *Lord Stanley's* log indicates, then, that just as many Africans were debilitated by the Middle Passage as perished.[156]

Enslaved Africans who did not contract diseases still suffered from ill health while at sea. Africans wasted away from inactivity for the several months they were trapped aboard ships because the deck was "fully occupied by the slaves" during the day making it "difficult to move," as the passenger on one slave ship described.[157] Captains made the captives "dance" twice a day at sea to prevent their muscles from atrophying but the Africans were so closely packed that they could barely move from their spot. Instead, the multitude surged up and down and swayed back and forth. James Arnold, surgeon of the slave ship *Ruby,* which sailed in 1787, told Parliament that the women were "driven in amongst themselves" during the dancing, rather than moving freely around the deck. The male slaves could "only jump up and rattle their Chains." On especially crowded ships, captains even gave up "dancing" the slaves entirely. When the *Brooks* sailed from the Gold Coast in 1784 the "custom of dancing" was "not practiced" until late in the voyage, the ship's surgeon recounted, by which point the Africans had already become weak and emaciated. Below deck, Africans were crushed together so tightly that they could not stretch out their limbs, nor turn over to relieve painful cramps.[158]

[156] Aubrey, *The Sea-Surgeon*, p.123.
[157] Riland ed., *Memoirs,* p.57. For an almost identical description, see, Coleman ed., Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," p.145.
[158] Testimony of James Arnold, *Report of the Lords,* p.126. Trotter, *Observations,* p.53. According to Smeathman, the crew staged a game in the day where they threw broken ship biscuits from the stage on the barricado to the enslaved children, who competed with each other to leap in the air and catch them (Coleman ed., Smeathman, "Oeconomy of a Slave Ship," p.144).

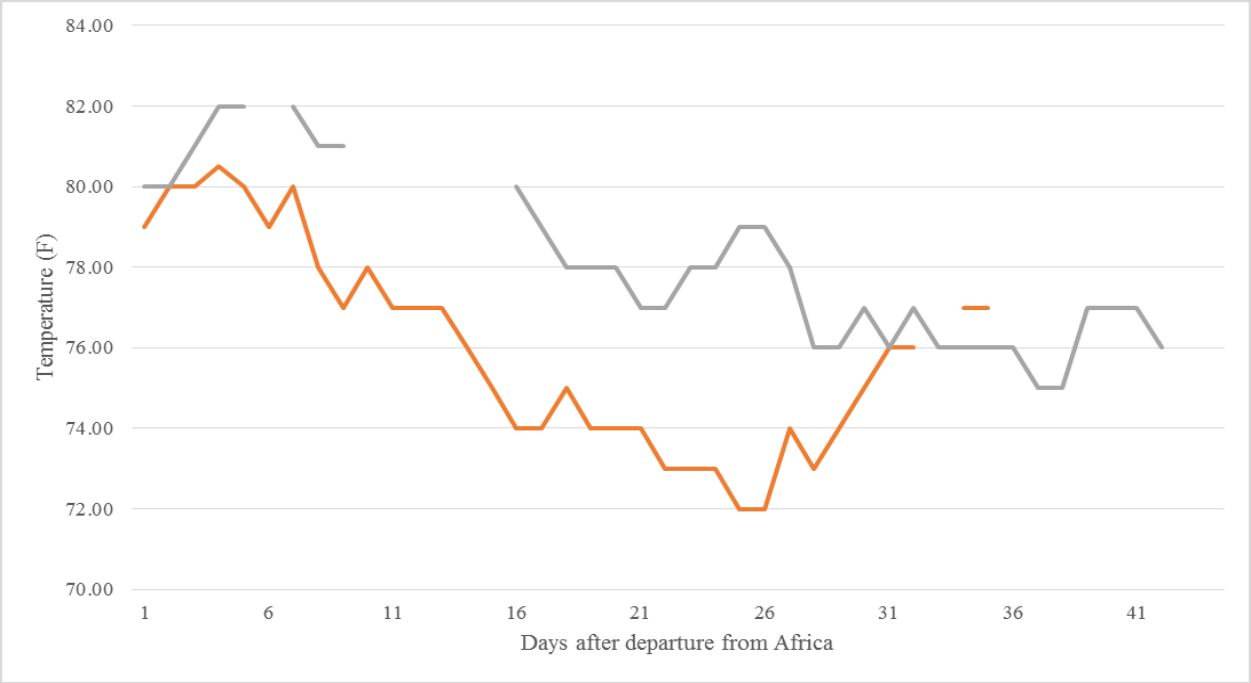
Slaves had their flesh galled by crudely-forged shackles and rough wooden planks. Infected sores wept, and slowly spread along captives' arms and legs, causing fevers. Africans lying on their sides below deck also had the skin on their elbows and hips "rubbed off," a passenger on a slave ship stated, and their flesh "much bruised" by the motion of the ship. Emaciated prisoners, in particular, had their skin entirely removed from the "shoulder, elbows, and hips" revealing the bones underneath, Falconbridge remembered of his enslaved patients, and lay in agony in their own "blood and mucus."[159]

Cold weather at sea compounded these miseries by forcing captives below deck for days, and sometimes weeks. Captain John Newton took daily readings with a thermometer during two voyages to the coast of Africa in 1752/3 and 1754/5 and they show that the temperature above decks dropped considerably once a ship was at sea (Figure 3.19). Seventeen days after leaving the coast on his first voyage, Newton wrote in his log that the air was "very sharp & cold" and the naked slaves could not be "upon ye deck in ye day time" because the temperature had dropped to seventy-four Fahrenheit. For two more weeks, the temperatures remained low enough for Newton to believe they caused discomfort for the slaves and so he kept them below decks entirely or hauled in the main sails to "keep ye slaves as warm as possible whilst upon deck." Although the temperature on Newton's next voyage remained a few degrees higher they still plunged, causing discomfort for the slaves. Cold temperatures could result in the Africans being kept below for much of the voyage. When the *Black Prince* sailed from the Gold Coast ten years after Newton's voyage, for example, the captives came on deck for just half a day in a whole

[159] Riland ed., *Memoirs,* p.56. Falconbridge, *Account,* p.35. Captives had some relief when their shackles were taken off the afflicted area, but it did not mean that they were liberated: if the shackle was taken off a man's wrist, then his legs were bound together; if the ankle was sore, both hands were bound.

month because of bad weather.[160] The rooms below deck became particularly hellish at such moments. Water sloshed into the rooms through the raised gratings and so the captives were "always wett," as the captain of the *Isabella,* another vessel beset by bad weather, wrote in his logbook in 1798. The slaves had to eat and drink below. "The heat and smell of these rooms," Newton later wrote, "when the weather will not admit of the Slaves being brought upon deck," was "insupportable." Once the Africans were finally able to come on deck, they were, a passenger on a slave ship recalled, "extremely dispirited" and "sickly."[161]

Figure 3.19: Daily Temperature readings on the voyages of the *African,* 1752/3 and 1753/4



Source: Logbook of the *African*, 1752/3, 1753/4, LOG/M/46, NMM.

People trapped in crowded rooms below deck for long periods of time were slowly poisoned by carbon dioxide, which steadily increased in concentration as hundreds of people exhaled in poorly ventilated spaces. Initially, people exposed to low concentrations of carbon

[160] Logbook of the *African*, May 14, May 17, 1752, LOG/M/46, NMM. Logbook of the *Black Prince*, March 1-May 7, 1763 (East Ardsley: EP Microform, 1967).
[161] Logbook of the *Isabella*, August 15-September 27, 1798, HCA16/94, TNAUK. Newton, *Thoughts,* p.35. Riland ed., *Memoirs,* p.51.

dioxide felt drowsy but soon after, their skin flushed, their blood pressure and heart rate rose, and their hearing would become impaired. Their chests heaving for breath, the captive became dizzy, and had a painful headache. As carbon dioxide levels reached dangerously high levels, panic set in as peoples' vision dimmed, they became confused and began to pass out. Witnesses on slave ships vividly described the fright that took hold of hundreds of people when they were simultaneously afflicted. In stormy weather, the crew of the *Brooks* hauled tarpaulins over the hatchways, Thomas Trotter related, causing the temperature below decks to soar and preventing fresh air from circulating. The terrified captives tried to "heave" the hatches up, the ship's surgeon described, and cried out in panic "Kickeraboo, Kickeraboo"—"we are dying." When the covers were taken off, the Africans flew "to the hatchway with all the signs of terror and dread of suffocation," and many were "in a dying state" when they were brought on deck, no doubt having passed out from exposure to high concentrations of carbon dioxide. Another slave ship officer recalled that the women on his ship got "up on the beams where the greatings have been raised" in order to "breathe more freely." Fearing that they would "take the air from the other slaves," the crew mercilessly drove them back below. When the *Royal George* was anchored off Bonny bar in 1729, the slaves made a "universal shriek" below decks at midnight, a sailor on the vessel remembered. The crew asked what "ailed them," and they replied with "wild confusion of mind" that the "devil was among them" as tens of people fainted from a lack of air.[162]

Africans also suffered from dehydration at sea, especially on lengthy voyages. Captains made careful calculations of the provisions and water aboard the vessel when they took their departure from the coast. "Having now departed from the Coast," the captain of the *Eliza* wrote

[162] Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.84. See also, Thomas Trotter, *Observations*, pp.50-70, where he described the same voyage. Testimony of James Morley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.158. Silas Told, *An Account of the Life, and Dealings of God with Silas Told. Written by Himself* (London, 1805), p.25.

in his logbook on July 19, 1805, "we have 74 Punch[eons] Water, 6 Tons Rice, 4000 Billets Wood, 3 Ton Beans, 100 Gal[lons] P[alm] Oil, 3 Tons Bread, ½ B[are]l Pepper & 179 Slaves." Water, in particular, was counted to the gallon, and carefully rationed out to the slaves. Captain Norris carefully noted in his logbook that he had "16000 Gall[ons]" of water aboard his ship *Unity* when it took its departure from Sao Tome in January 1774. Assuming a daily expenditure of 210 Gallons, Norris anticipated that his ship could stay at sea until April 16, 1774, a passage of 76 days. Captains issued a half gallon of water to each person per day, but that included the water to boil their provisions, leaving just a half pint to drink after each meal. Dehydration was, as medical historians Kiple and Higgins argued, "by far the biggest cause of slave mortality during the middle passage," because "fluxes" and "fevers" emptied the body of vital fluids. But the survivors also suffered perpetual thirst, headaches, weakness, dizziness, and painful muscle cramps; dehydration caused anorexia and made it difficult for captives to digest their food, making them waste away.[163]

By the time the Africans finally disembarked from a slave ship in the Americas, then, they had undergone a physically and mentally exhausting voyage that typically debilitated a proportion of them. Enslaved people perished in large numbers on the Middle Passage, as historians have shown, because "fluxes" and "fevers" swept through people packed closely together. But the mortality figures carefully calculated by historians mask the terrible effects of the Middle Passage on the survivors, who arrived in the Americas weak and emaciated after months of inactivity and dehydration.

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[163] Kenneth F. Kiple and Brian T. Higgins, "Mortality Caused by Dehydration during the Middle Passage," *Social Science History* 13, no. 4 (1989), pp.421–37. Logbook of the *Eliza,* July 19, 1805, T70/1220, TNAUK. Logbook of the *Unity,* [Jan 1774], Earle Family Papers, D/EARLE/1/4, LRO. A slave ship sailor who was put to a short allowance of water on a 1802 voyage remembered dreaming at night of a "pure crystal stream" that would "gush up so copiously" that he could swallow it "so sweetly." When he awoke "seven thousand miles from the sweet water" he found it "all a dilusion [sic]" and his tongue was "like a piece of dried fish." "[T]he distress was" he recalled later in life, "almost unbearable." (Robinson, *Experience,* p.57).

*

For over two-hundred years the image of the slave ship *Brooks* has evoked, as Thomas Clarkson observed, "an instantaneous impression of horror upon all who saw it."[164] In fact, the experience of the Middle Passage was much worse even than the "horror" depicted in the *Brooks* image. The diagram showed 470 Africans crammed into spaces in which they could do nothing but lie on their backs, a degree of crowding equivalent to about 8' square per person. Prior to the passage of regulatory acts from 1789 onwards, few Africans were transported in such conditions. Most were carried across the Atlantic squeezed into spaces measuring just under 6' square. At that degree of crowding, enslaved Africans would have been pressed together into each other's arms, and unable to move. The abolitionists who designed the *Brooks* diagram knew very well that the crowding depicted in their diagram was not reflective of actual practices in the trade. The description beneath the image noted that the *Brooks* had carried 609 slaves on its most recent voyage. They left it to the reader's imagination to envisage what the slaves might have looked like "on their sides, or on each other." Stuck painfully "on their sides" and sleeping "on each other" typified the experience of the Middle Passage for most of the millions of Africans who were carried to the Americas in British ships throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The diagram of the *Brooks* also fails to capture the variety of experiences on the Middle Passage. Merchants fitted out vessels that ranged enormously in size depending on the number, heights, ages, and gender of enslaved people who were sold at the numerous ports on the African coast. An African could, as a result, be imprisoned on a small vessel with low and narrow decks with tens of other captives, or a large vessel like the *Brooks*, with almost seven hundred other

[164] Clarkson, *History,* II, p.90.

people. Once aboard a vessel, enslaved Africans also had different experiences depending on their ages and gender—a result of deliberate decisions by slave trading merchant and captains. Women were usually crowded together more closely than men, struggling to breath in poorly ventilated rooms at the aft of the vessel. Men were comparatively less crowded, but only because they were shackled with heavy chains for the duration of the voyage, even when they were on the deck during the day. Children, by contrast, could run around the deck and were taken out of the rooms below deck, albeit to make space for adults. Africans were also crowded to different degrees depending on when and where they embarked, with some captives packed exceedingly tightly during wartime periods, and others given comparatively more room if a captain could not purchase his "compliment" of slaves. One image, however powerful, cannot convey the many different experiences that millions of Africans had of the Middle Passage.

Nevertheless, Africans shared many common experiences on the Middle Passage. Most suffered the misery of being trapped aboard a vessel for months as loading proceeded. Once at sea, captives experienced privation and violence from capricious and brutal captors. Enslaved people perished in large numbers from agonizing infectious diseases, and the survivors were left emaciated and weak. The Middle Passage was not, as historians such as Stanley Elkins had previously proposed, an experience that was so mentally traumatizing that it left people devoid of culture and personality. It was, however, an experience that took a terrible physical and unimaginable mental toll on its survivors.

Chapter 4- Sale in the Americas

On July 30, 1755, 220 African men, women, and children fearfully huddled in a yard in Charleston, South Carolina, having arrived in the colony two weeks earlier on the slave ship *Prince George*. Earlier that morning, the captives had been rowed across Charleston harbor, force marched from the dock to the yard, and then roughly sorted into groups by white merchants. The captives had little idea of what awaited them: the yard was closed off to the street, preventing the Africans from seeing out, and a noisy crowd of planters outside from seeing in. In a startling instant, the boom of a gun shuddered the air, followed by the sound of excited cheers as the crowd surged through the gate. The colonists instantly laid hold of the screaming captives, who were simultaneously seized by other whites, who began "pulling and hawling" to try and pry the Africans away from each other. Colonists who lost the struggle to obtain the "good Slaves" came to "collaring each other" and "nearly to Blows." Those who had managed to grab a group of Africans pushed them aside, where they quickly inspected them, and pushed away any they thought were too unhealthy, young, or old to perform the forced labor for which they wanted them. They then "hurried out of the yard" with their chosen Africans, who "cr[ied] and beg[ged] that … their friend or relation… might be bought and sent with them, wherever they were going." The planters ignored these cries, callously rejecting the sickly and the children, who were sold later in the day. Within a single day, the Africans' Middle Passage had ended, and their lives as American slaves had begun.[165]

[165] The sale of the *Prince George's* Africans is described in Henry Laurens to Devonsheir, Reeve & Lloyd, Charleston, South Carolina, July 31, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, I, pp.304-5; Henry Laurens to Thomas Easton & Co., Charleston, July 31, 1755 in Ibid., I, pp.306-7 ("collaring"); Henry Laurens to Corsley Rogers & Son, Charleston, August 1, 1755 in Ibid., I, p.307; Henry Laurens to Henry Weare & Co., Charleston, August 6, 1755 in Ibid., I, p.312; Henry Laurens to Smith & Clifton, Charleston, August 12, 1755 in Ibid. I, p.313 ("pulling," "good Slaves," "nearly"). See also, Testimony of George Baillie in Lambert ed., HCSP, 73, p.184 ("hurried"); Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in Ibid., 72, p.308 ("cr[ied]").

The rapidity with which Africans were seemingly sold has led historians to pay comparatively little attention to American slave sales. Every general history of the slave trade, even those that are otherwise comprehensive, feature no more than a brief mention of how captives were sold in the Americas, while devoting entire chapters to the Middle Passage. Historians of colonial slavery, by contrast, have studied enslaved Africans after their arrival on plantations. Slave sales fall between these two areas of interest and have therefore been overlooked.[166] There are a number of article-length works on slave sales in certain American colonies, however. David Galenson performed a sophisticated quantitative analysis of the voluminous records of the Royal African Company, circa 1673-1711, discovering that the company's agents sold enslaved Africans according to what Galenson called their "quality," to colonial buyers across the social spectrum. Using the same source base, Stephanie Smallwood described the trauma that enslaved Africans suffered as they were commoditized through a dehumanizing sales process. Relatively little detailed work has been performed on the sale of Africans during the eighteenth century, when nine of every ten enslaved Africans were sold in the British Americas. Trevor Burnard and Kenneth Morgan have examined the sale of Africans in Jamaica, but they focused on the broad contours of the Kingston slave market, not slave sales themselves. They did discover that merchants, rather than planters, were significant buyers of slaves and suggested that "most" captives likely spent time in port prior to being resold. More

[166] For the sale of African in the Americas within general histories of the slave trade, see, for example, Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), pp.429-39; Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.95-6; James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), pp.61-3; Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, pp.111-13; Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.68-70; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, pp.152-4; James Walvin, *Crossings: Africa, the Americas and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), pp.122-26. The limited scholarship on American slave sales is especially striking when we consider that Walter Johnson has written an entire book on slave sales in the ante-Bellum South (Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

recently, Audra Diptee has argued that labor-hungry planters in late-eighteenth century Jamaica purchased sickly slaves, children, and the elderly, in addition to healthy adult Africans.[167]

This chapter builds on this small literature by looking at American slave sales from a comparative perspective, both chronologically and geographically. It begins by exploring how the Royal African Company (RAC) sold some of the first shiploads of captive Africans brought to the British Americas in the late seventeenth century. The company's factors developed sale techniques to channel Africans of different ages, gender, and health to American buyers of varying economic stature: rich planters purchased healthy adult slaves early in the sale, leaving the sick and the old to be bought by less-affluent colonists. Turning to slave sales in colonial South Carolina shows how factors throughout the Americas implemented and adapted the RAC's methods to sell Africans during the eighteenth century. Because the health and age of enslaved people arriving in South Carolina differed noticeably depending on from where they had been carried in Africa, the origins of enslaved people impacted their destinations after their sale. Looking closely at the voyage of the ship *Count du Norde* illustrates the consequences of this sales process for almost 600 enslaved people who were carried from Angola to South Carolina in 1784. Analyzing the records of 282 slave sales conducted in a variety of colonies and across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries demonstrates that enslaved people were subject to both the frenetic scramble sale, and slower more drawn out sales, depending on the particular economic conditions of the colony in which they had landed. Slave sales were, this chapter concludes,

[167] David Galenson, *Traders, Planters and Slaves: Market Behavior in Early English America* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.53-85. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, pp.153-81. Trevor Burnard and Kenneth Morgan, "The Dynamics of the Slave Market and Slave Purchasing Patterns in Jamaica, 1655–1788," *WMQ,* 3rd Ser., 58 (January 2001), pp.205-228. Kenneth Morgan also wrote a separate article that looked at the Charleston slave market ("Slave Sales in Colonial Charleston," *English Historical Review*, 113 (September 1998), pp.905-927). See also, Darold D. Wax, "'New Negroes Are Always in Demand': The Slave Trade in Eighteenth-Century Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly,* 68, No. 2 (Summer, 1984), pp.193-220. Sean Kelley, "Scrambling for Slaves: Captive Sales in Colonial South Carolina," *Slavery & Abolition*, 34 (2013), pp.1-21. Diptee, *From Africa to Jamaica*.

traumatic and typically drawn out experiences that shaped the forced migration of enslaved Africans in the Americas.

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The origins of British American slave sales can be traced to the convict and servant trade that provided Barbadian and Virginian planters with bound laborers during the two colonies' formative years, 1625 to 1660. Bound laborers, like captive Africans, were expected to perform heavy labor on cotton and tobacco plantations. They were shipped to the Americas in unsanitary, over-crowded vessels, causing the deaths of many migrants; on one voyage to Barbados in 1638 the crew threw "over board two and three [servants] in a day for many dayes together." Once servants arrived in the Americas, they were, as the historian Abbot Emerson Smith states, "displayed on deck," where "the planters came on board to inspect them," before being "'[sold] to the highest bidder." Buyers and sellers who entered the servant market developed a de-humanizing language to distinguish between servants according to their physique. Using a phrase that would not be amiss in a slave trader's letters, the seller of a group of Irish convicts in 1636 judged them to be "very lustye and strong Boddied," and therefore hoped to "[sell them] to the best Advantidg" in Barbados. When a shipload arrived in the Americas, they were sold for prices that varied according to the laborers' "working faculties," as the shippers of one group of convicts sent to Barbados in May 1656 wrote. The planters ascertained the health of laborers, one convict shipped to Virginia in the mid seventeenth century recalled, through a callous and dehumanizing inspection: they examined "our limbs," he wrote, "made us walk to see if we were compleat," and "view'd our teeth to see if they were good." Even before Africans were forcibly shipped to the British Americas in large numbers, colonists had grown accustomed to viewing

humans as tradable commodities to which they could attach a price according to their physical attributes.[168]

Barbados' "Sugar Revolution," as historian Richard Dunn has described it, presaged a clear shift from bound labor toward the importation of enslaved Africans. The *Star* delivered the first known shipload of captive Africans to Barbados in 1641, marking the commencement of the slave trade to the island and, by August 1645, an American visitor wrote from Barbados that the planters there had bought "no lesse than a thousand Negroes" during the year. "[T]he more [slaves] they buie," the American continued, "the better able they are to buye," because the Africans earned "as much as they cost" within a "yeare and halfe." In the 1650s and 1660s, colonists in Nevis also embraced sugar production and began importing and purchasing Africans using the Barbadian model, which they helped to transplant to Jamaica in 1656, when an expedition of 1,500 Nevis planters settled Jamaica's southeastern coast. By the second half of the seventeenth century, sugar and slavery were intrinsically linked throughout the British Caribbean, bringing about the importation of thousands of captive Africans through the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Figure 4.1).[169]

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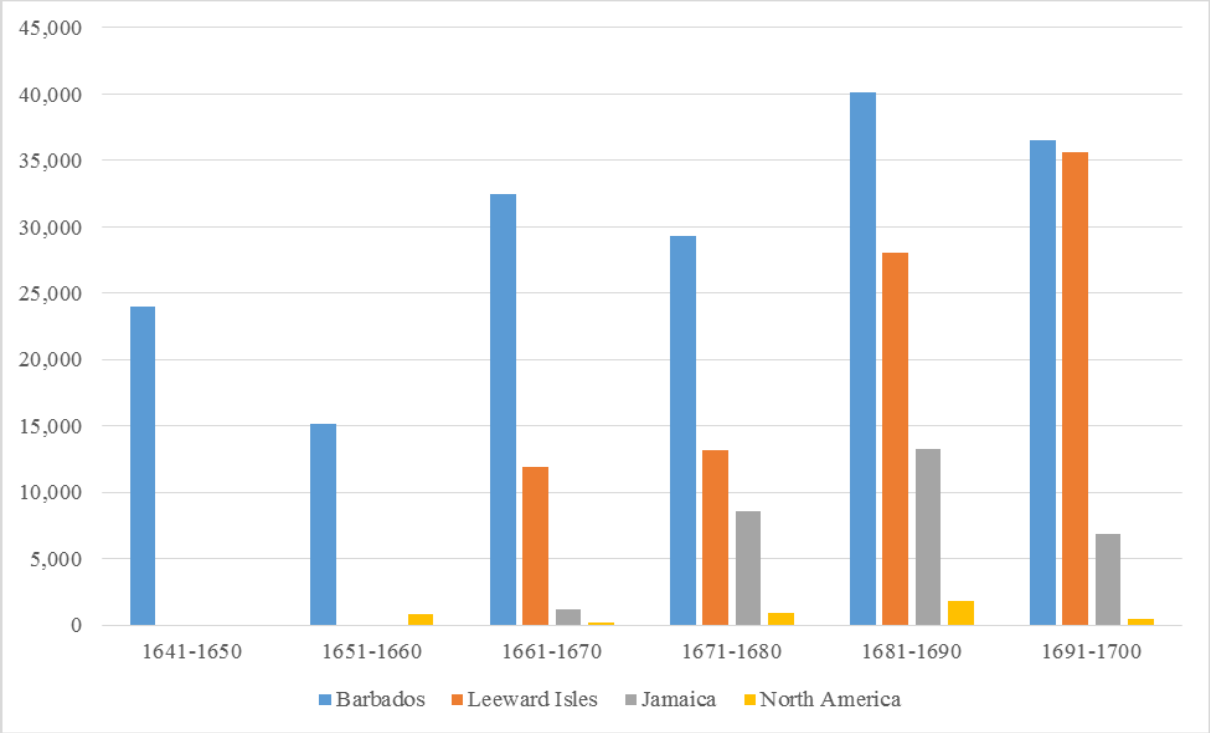
[168] Quoted in Richard Dunn, *Sugar & Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p.57 ("over," "very"). Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p.19. Marcelus Rivers and Oxenbridge Foyle, *England's Slavery, or Barbados Merchandize* (London, 1659), p.5 ("working"). Quoted in Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas, 1607-1776* (Bath: Allan Sutton Publishing, 1992), pp.117-8 ("limbs"). For comparative mortality rates between the slave trade and the convict trade, albeit during the eighteenth century, see Klein et al., "Transoceanic Mortality" p.93–118. The authors discovered that the "Mortality rates for convicts from Britain to the thirteen colonies were also below those on slave ships" at 11.3 percent in the period 1719-36, compared to 17.7 percent for enslaved people transported in the same period (*TSTD,* Estimates: British flagged vessels, 1719-36).

[169] Elizabeth Donnan ed., *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington D.C., 1930), I, p.125 ("no lesse," "more"). Dunn, *Sugar and Slavery,* p.73 ("Once"). For a recent re-interpretation of Dunn's "Sugar Revolution" thesis, see, Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Pres, 2014). For the early slave trade to Barbados, see Larry Gragg, "'To Procure Negroes': The English Slave Trade to Barbadoes," *Slavery & Abolition* 16, 1 (April 1995), pp.65-84.

Figure 4.1: Enslaved Africans (number) landed in the British Americas by region, 1641-1700



Source: *TSTD,* Estimates: British flagged vessels, 1641-1700.

In 1660, the Royal African Company received a royal monopoly on England's trade with Africa and soon became the premier slave-trading firm in the British Americas, a position it held until the close of the seventeenth century. Within ten years of the RAC's founding, its ships imported almost five thousand Africans into the British Caribbean every year, principally to Barbados; in the 1680s, the RAC landed eight out of every ten of the almost seventy thousand Africans forcibly transported to the British Americas. The RAC was never able to enforce its monopoly, however, and interloping private traders entered the lucrative slave trade in increasing numbers in the 1690s. Beset by massive unpaid planter debts and undercut by the interlopers, the RAC effectively lost its monopoly on the slave trade during the Glorious Revolution; Parliament officially opened the slave trade to private merchants in 1691 and the RAC's share of the slave trade plummeted soon after. The Company ceased fitting out slave ships in 1731, and eighteen

years later Parliament revoked its charter. Although the RAC never held an effective monopoly on the slave trade, the company's American agents sold large numbers of Africans in the 1670s and 80s, just as the slave trade to the British Caribbean massively expanded. The sales methods designed and implemented by the RAC in this crucial period therefore influenced how millions of others Africans were subsequently sold in the British Americas.[170]

When one of the RAC's ships arrived in the Americas, the company's agents immediately made arrangement for the sale. The company's directors ordered ship captains to steer their ships from Africa to Barbados to put in for fresh provisions and orders from London. Within twenty-four hours of a ship's arrival at Barbados, the Africans were mustered on deck and counted by the RAC's factors, to ensure that the captain had not smuggled slaves, and to report the arrival of the vessel to London. After inspecting the Africans, the RAC's factors either dispatched the vessel to the Company's other agents in Jamaica, Nevis, or Virginia, or elected to sell the captives in Barbados. Once a ship arrived at its final destination the company's resident agents picked a day to sell the captives by calculating how long it would take for a large number of planters to arrive at the port. As the RAC's Barbadian agents explained in 1684, "when a ship comes in with negroes we are forced to stay 3, 4 or 5 daies from selling that we may give due notice of the time of our sales & invite customers to come." RAC agents opened slave sales in the small islands of Barbados and Nevis, on average, just three days after a ship's arrival, ample time for planters to learn of the sale and make the short journey to town. Factors in Jamaica waited approximately a week for planters to reach Port Royal from more distant centers of

[170] The best single volume history of the RAC remains K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London: Holiday House, 1970). See also, Ann M. Carlos and Jamie Brown Kruse, "The Decline of the Royal African Company: Fringe Firms and the Role of the Charter," *Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (May 1996), pp.291–313; Matthew David Mitchell, "'Legitimate Commerce' in the Eighteenth Century: The Royal African Company of England under the Duke of Chandos, 1720-1726," *Enterprise and Society* 14, no. 3 (September 2013), pp.544–78; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

settlement, such as Yallah's Bay and Old Harbor twenty miles to the east and west of Port Royal respectively. No newspapers were published in the British Caribbean during the seventeenth century and so the RAC used various means to advertise their sales: in Nevis, the factor "put upp bills to give notice of ye sayle day for ye slaves," as one RAC captain wrote in his log in 1675; in Jamaica and Barbados, the factors hired messengers to go "upp & downe the country to invite Customers to our day of sales." Word of mouth also played a part in advertising slave sales: rumors circulated between the islands about recently arrived slave ships and could either lure planters or drive them away from sales.[171]

When the planters arrived at a slave ship, they sought healthy African men and women who could immediately be put to work and then endure a lifetime of arduous labor. To the planters, a shipload of captive Africans would thus consist, as the RAC's Barbadian factors wrote in August 1680, of "young negroes men and women not … disceased." In reality, the ship loads of slaves who arrived aboard the RAC's ships rarely met the planters' imaginary standards. In the 1670s and 1680s, just over one in five of the Africans embarked on RAC vessels perished on the Middle Passage. As the *Lord Stanley's* medical log indicated, an equal proportion of the Africans likely arrived in the Americas debilitated after contracting the diseases that had killed

[171] For the smuggling of captive Africans by RAC captains, see the numerous complaints from Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne, the RAC's Barbadian factors, to the RAC in Letters Received from Africa and the West Indies [1678-1681], CMTA, T70/1, TNAUK. Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, March 15, 1684, CMTA, T70/1, TNAUK ("when a ship," "upp & downe"). "James : journal of intended voyage," June 17, 1675, CMTA, T70/1211, TNAUK ("put upp"). Buyers sailed to Nevis from the nearby islands of Saint Kitts, Antigua, and Redondo to purchase slaves. See, for example, the sale invoice of the *James,* in which the first four buyers of slaves are labelled as "St Christophers men" (CMTA, T70/936, TNAUK, f.74). For messengers sent to Yallahs, see, for example, the sales invoice for the ship *William,* 1674, CMTA, T70/936, TNAUK, f.76; for dispatches to Old Harbor, see the the sales invoice for the *Richard,* 1680, CMTA, T70/938, TNAUK, f.260. In March 1682, the planters were reported to be avoiding the sale of the *Golden Fortune* and *Saint George's* captives because they thought "there was greate mortality in the ship & that the flux was much amongst them." (Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, March 19, 1682, CMTA, T70/1, TNAUK). In 1704, the company agent in Nevis likewise wrote that the "Rumour of the Small Pox being aboard deterred severall persons from buying at ye sale" (Quoted in Galenson, *Traders, Planters,* p.86). When the *John Alexander's* captives were brought to Nevis, a report had already arrived from Barbados that the captives were "refuse Bite slaves," making the captain concerned that he would struggle to draw planters to the sale ("James : journal of intended voyage," June 15, 1675, CMTA, T70/1211, TNAUK).

their shipmates. Neither did RAC captains solely purchase the "men and women" that American planters desired. Approximately ten percent of the slaves embarked on RAC vessels were children, a proportion that grew in the early eighteenth century as RAC captains faced increasing competition from interloping merchants on the African coast. The Africans who limped off the gangplank from the RAC's ships were, then, a mixture of men and women, adults and children, in varying states of health.[172]

To conceal the horrors of the Middle Passage, the RAC's agents sorted the Africans according to their age and health prior to their sale. The factors "divided" the Africans by picking out the healthy adult men and women and set them aside from the old, the young, and the sickly. In Jamaica, before 1695, the factors then arranged the healthy adult slaves into uniform lots, which varied in size and composition but always included adult men and women who the factor then offered at fixed prices to planters. In December 1691, for example, the RAC factors pulled aside 175 of the 579 slaves on the *East India Merchant* and sorted them into thirty-five lots, each of which contained three men and two women. The factor sold each lot for £130, or £26 per person. In Barbados and the Leeward Islands, by contrast, the factors did not employ a formal lot sale system but still pulled aside the healthiest adult Africans to ensure that arriving buyers had immediate access to healthy adult slaves. David Galenson analyzed the prices that the RAC sold slaves for in Barbados between 1673 and 1723 and found that the agents priced the slaves according to their gender, health and age. Men were consistently priced higher than women, women priced above boys, and boys sold for more than girls. By the opening day of the sale, then, the RAC's factors had put the captive Africans into two distinct groups: the healthy,

[172] The proportions of children carried on the RAC's ships were: 1671-80, 9.0%; 1681-90, 12.3%; 1691-1700, 9.2%; 1701-1710, 18.3%; 1711-20, 14.2%; 1721-30, 18.2% (*TSTD,* Vessel owners: Royal African Company, 1671-1730). Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, August 18, 1680, CMTA, T70/1, TNAUK ("young"). Ship-board mortality is from *TSTD,* ship owner "Royal African Company," 1670-1699.

adult slaves; and the unhealthy, aged and adolescents. The captives were then forced to shave and gloss themselves with oil, a humiliation designed to obscure differences between them and further the illusion of health and youthfulness.[173]

The factors next placed the captives around the ship to await the buyers. They put the healthiest Africans in a specific area of the ship, probably on one side of the barricade that bisected the vessel at the main mast. It is unlikely that extremely sickly Africans were sold alongside their healthy shipmates, because many of them were literally on the verge of death. Upon the opening of the sale, hired ferries rowed colonists to the slave ship, presumably in the morning, where they found rum, brandy, and wine laid out for them. On average, forty-three colonists appeared on the first day of the RAC's sales, but as many as eighty buyers attended the largest sales. The true number of people who attended the sale was likely much higher as colonists brought assistants with them, and the RAC agents did not record potential buyers who left without purchasing a slave. With hundreds of captives on the deck, tens of buyers pacing with their attendants, and the ship's crew, the deck must have thus been extremely congested, a fact acknowledged by the RAC's Barbadian factors who said that colonists had to "buy in a croud."[174]

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[173] Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, March 15, 1684, CMTA, T70/16, TNAUK ("divide"). The first reference to the oiling of slaves in the British Caribbean is in the ledger of the RAC's ship *Frisland,* which sold 291 Africans in Barbados in April 1674, and has an expense for "14 galls of sweet oyle," and "2 jarrs of oyle," purchased from ashore (Ship *Friezland* : accounts, CMTA, T70/1210, TNAUK, f.3). The *Prosperous*, which sold 317 Africans in November 1675, included an expense for "18 knives to shave the negroes," (Invoice Books: Homewards, CMTA, T70/936, TNAUK, f.161), and the captain of the *James,* which arrived in Barbados seven months later, noted in his logbook that the day before their sale "ye slaves being shaved I gave them fresh water to wash & palme oyle." ("James : journal of intended voyage," May 24, 1675, CMTA, T70/1211, TNAUK). For the shaving and glossing of Africans, see also Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors,* pp.160-61. For slave sales in Barbados, see, Galenson, *Traders, Planters,* pp.53-64.

[174] The number of buyers is from a sample of 110 sales conducted between 1673 and 1708. The number of buyers at the RAC's individual sales varied so much that it is difficult to generalize. Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, March 15, 1684, CMTA, TNAUK, T70/16 ("buy"). Factors spent large sums of money to "treat," or "entertain" "the country," as they typically described it in their records. In August 1675, the factors for the slave ship *Golden Hinde,* for example, spent twice as much on "treatmnt of the Country on ye sale day," than they did on

Colonists purchased captives differently in Jamaica than in the eastern Caribbean at the RAC's sales. On the first day of a slave sale in Jamaica, planters invited specifically by the RAC agents arrived at the ship and chose how many of the previously sorted lots of Africans they desired. There was little negotiation between individual sellers and the Company's agents as the "lotted" captives were always sold at fixed prices. Buyers could, however, try and collectively drive down the prices of the slaves. In September 1683, for example, the planters "bl[ew] upon" the slaves for "some time before any would accept of them." Presumably, then, the buyers inspected the slaves to see if they thought them worth the uniform prices that the agent had set in advance, a humiliating experience for the Africans who were forced to flex their muscles, leap in the air, and show their teeth to terrifying European strangers. After agreeing on the prices, the majority of buyers purchased a single lot of Africans while larger buyers bought two and sometimes as many as ten lots of captives. In the eastern Caribbean, by contrast, planters selected Africans creating their own lots, before negotiating a price that was typically fixed for all of the slaves within the lot. When William Bulley picked out eighteen men and eight women aboard the *London Merchant* in March 1673*,* for example, he paid £20,10 sterling for each individual, regardless of their sex. Robert Kelly selected six men and a woman from the same vessel, but negotiated a price of £17,10 for each African. The RAC's agents used slightly different methods to sell Africans depending on their location, but in each case they sold the healthiest enslaved people at the beginning of the sale for high prices.[175]

"refreshment for ye Negroes," revealing much about the slave traders' priorities (CMTA, T70/936, TNAUK, f.152). The *Saint George,* which landed 574 Africans in Barbados, had 78 named buyers on October 10, 1676, the first day of the two day sale giving some sense of the number of people who visited the RAC's ships (CMTA, T70/937, TNAUK, ff.40-1). Galenson agrees that the unhealthiest slaves were left "on board ship when the others were brought on shore to market" and placed "on a ship's lower decks if the sales were held on board" (Galenson, *Traders, Planters,* p.85).

[175] Hender Molesworth and Charles Penhallow to RAC, Barbados, September 11, 1683, CMTA, T70/16, TNAUK ("bl[ew]"). Burnard analyzed the purchasers of slaves at the RAC's Jamaican sales and found that the number of

Throughout the British Caribbean the buyers of the highest priced captives were, as Galenson found, the richest and most politically powerful colonists. The RAC's agents, Galenson wrote, "accommodate[d] the wealthier and more important planters first," and the sale then proceeded in "roughly descending order of planters' wealth." A colony's Governor typically appeared as both the first buyer and the purchaser of large numbers of the highest-priced slaves—that is the healthiest adult men. Affluent planters followed and picked out groups of adult men, leaving the women and children to be bought by planters who possessed fewer acres; women were, as Galenson found, "2.5 times more likely to be sold" later in the sale. Children were also typically sold after the adults, sometimes in a separate section of the sale. During the sale of the *Henry and William's* captives in Jamaica in May 1680, for example, the adult slaves sorted into lots were sold early on the first day of the sale and then the ship's children were sold immediately afterwards, but to a different set of buyers.[176]

Once the rich colonists had carried off the healthiest Africans there remained those who had been literally been refused by the buyers—the so-called "refuse" slaves. The condition of these people can be gleaned from the RAC's notes that the factors made in their sales invoices: "sick," "distempered," "very small," "mad" "lame," "blind," "full of ye small pox," "weak," and "almost dead.[177] The factors sold these Africans either in bulk, or rowed them ashore and sold them at auction for low prices in an attempt to close the sale. Poor, un-creditworthy colonists speculated in human lives by ghoulishly buying sickly slaves at low prices, and then nursing

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large buyers increased over time, presumably as wealth became consolidated on the island. "In the 1670s, the top decile of purchasers bought on average seven slaves at each purchase. By the 1680s the comparable number had risen to 18 and after 1690 large purchasers typically bought their slaves in very large lots of 28 slaves each purchase." Trevor Burnard, "Who Bought Slaves in Early America? Purchasers of Slaves from the Royal African Company in Jamaica, 1674–1708," *Slavery & Abolition* 17, no. 2 (August 1, 1996), p.72). Trading Invoice of the *London Merchant,* CMTA, T70/936, TNAUK, f.8.

[176] Galenson, *Trader, Planter,* p.62, 87. *Henry & William,* CMTA, T70/938, TNAUK, ff.265-69.

[177] Trading Invoices of the *Frisland* (1674); *Swallow* (1674); *Exchange* (1677); *African* (1677); *Mary Gold* (1677); *Saint George* (1678); *Providence* (1679); *Saint George* (1680); *Arthur* (1680) in CMTA, T70/936-939, TNAUK.

those who could be saved back to health, before reselling them at a profit. In January 1682, for example, the RAC's Barbadian agents wrote that they had "constant customers" who "adventure their Fortunes" by buying "poore sickly & refuse negroes." Caribbean historian Trevor Burnard analyzed the identities of purchases of slaves from the RAC's Jamaican sales and discovered a similar pattern. There were "just six men who bought slaves on more than twenty occasions," Burnard found, all but one of whom were merchants based in Port Royal.[178]

The perverse logic of the slave trade, in which merchants fixed a value upon human beings based on their health and age thus mapped onto the stratified social hierarchy of plantation whites at the RAC's slave sales. The roots of this system can be traced to the servant and convict trade and the social stratification that attended the adoption of sugar monoculture in the Caribbean. Almost from the moment that Britons settled the islands, they imported human beings and assigned them a price according to their physical attributes. The RAC used a similar system to sell imported Africans, who they channeled to planters from across the social spectrum, ensuring that rich planters could obtain healthy adults, while poor colonists and merchants sold the sickly and the young.[179]

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In the eighteenth century, the frontier of plantation agriculture expanded throughout the British Americas, increasing the markets at which slave traders could sell their captive cargoes.

[178] Edwyn Stede & Stephen Gascoigne to RAC, Barbados, January 27, 1682, CMTA, T70/1, TNAUK ("constant"). For speculators in captives in Jamaica, see Burnard, "Who Bought Slaves in Early America?," p.87.

[179] The Guinea Company—the primary exporter of captive Africans to Barbados during the period 1650-1673—appears to have experimented with a different system. In December 1651, the company advised the captain of its frigate *Supply* to deliver his Gambian captives to John Wood's plantation in Barbados, and there "[make] sale of them so soone as you can for our most advantage for ready payment, not trusting any [i.e. not giving credit]." The captain was further instructed to "make use of their Labour in Lieu of their dyet," so as to "prevent the makeing of debts upon the Island." (Donnan, *Documents,* I, 132). The experiment must have been a failure because the Guinea Company continued to extend credit to the planters and its successor, the RAC, used a different method.

When British slave traders sailed to the Americas in the first half of the eighteenth century, they could elect to land their prisoners in Barbados; proceed to Antigua, Montserrat, Saint Kitts or Nevis in the Leeward Islands; or make a lengthier journey to Jamaica, South Carolina or the Chesapeake. By 1763, slavers could also land Africans in the newly acquired islands of Dominica, Saint Vincent, Grenada, or Tobago, which possessed a booming demand for workers as pioneering planters cleared the islands for cultivation, and merchants re-exported captives to the neighboring French islands. At the close of the century, ship captains could also navigate their vessels to the Guianas and Trinidad. The variety of slave markets was enormous: from tiny sugar, cotton, and coffee growing Caribbean islands, to massive mainland American colonies, where planters raised indigo, rice, and tobacco.

The expansion of plantation agriculture into a broad range of regions and the collapse of the RAC did not result in a noticeable change in the methods that slave traders used to sell Africans, however. The Reverend James Ramsay observed of the slave sales he attended in Saint Kitts during the 1760s that the factor and the captain "divided" the slaves "in Three Sets; first, "the healthy, well-assorted, or prime Slaves;" second, "the puny and ill-assorted" slaves, that is people who had "poor Constitutions, or are either too young or too old;" and third the "the emaciated, sickly, or refuse Slaves." Writing in 1785, Jamaican slave factor John Tailyour informed a British merchant that he sold the "prime" Africans slaves first for "fixed" prices, and then "disposed" of "the remainder… at prices according to their goodness" to merchants. "Planters in great credit," Tailyour added, "buy none but prime slaves." Danish and French slave traders used the same techniques to sell Africans. When the missionary Christian Oldendorp visited Saint Croix in the 1760s, he wrote that the "the strong and healthy" imported Africans were sold first, followed by the "sick and weak." Paul Isert, who sailed to Saint Croix on a slave

ship in 1784, witnessed the sale of several hundred Africans by a four-hour sale after which there only remained the "frail or ageing Blacks" who were, he wrote, were "sold wholesale the next day." In Saint Domingue, French Guinea factors sorted (*alloti)* arriving captives into groups according to their "age, strength, and vigor," as one French historian has described, and sold the healthy adult captives first, leaving the "tail of the cargo" (*queue de cargaison*) to be purchased by *speculateurs*. The basic structure of slave sales thus remained constant throughout the Americas—be they British, French or Danish—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[180]

Focusing on the sale of enslaved Africans in colonial South Carolina illustrates how Guinea factors adopted and adapted the RAC's methods to sell Africans in the eighteenth century, and the way that these practices shaped the forced migration pattern of enslaved Africans both to and within individual American colonies. The sources for slave sales in colonial South Carolina are the most complete for any British American colony before 1775. The papers of Charleston Guinea factor Henry Laurens, who traded between 1751 and 1763, include financial records detailing the sale of 3,500 Africans, and letters from Laurens in which he described how he organized those sales. No comparable collection exists for any of the British Caribbean islands in the same period, or for Virginia. Charleston's newspapers are also far more

[180] Testimony of James Ramsay in *Report of the Lords,* pp.141-2. John Tailyour to James Jones, Kingston, Jamaica, May 30, 1788, TFP, WCL. Oldendorp, *C.G.A. Oldendorp's History*, p.219. Winsnes, ed., *Letters*, p.182. Dieudonne Rinchon, *Pierre Ignace-Lievin Van Alstein Captain Negrier, Gand 1733-Nantes 1793* (Dakar: Ifan, 1964), p.193, 194, pp.313-4. For similar descriptions, see also, Testimony of John Knox in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.104; Testimony of William James in *Report of the Lords,* p.138; Testimony of John Castles in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, p.218; Testimony of Alexander Falconbridge in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 72, p.596; Testimony of Thomas Trotter in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.87; Testimony of Clement Noble in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, pp.118-19; Testimony of James Morley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.159; Testimony of Thomas Clappeson in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.212; Testimony of William Fitzmaurice in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.233.

complete than their Caribbean equivalents and contain a raft of advertisements for slave sales in the city.[181]

The first white settlers who arrived in South Carolina from the Caribbean in the mid-seventeenth century came with first-hand experience of purchasing Africans from slave ships. South Carolina was, as historian Peter Wood has aptly labelled it, a "Colony of a Colony" having been founded in the 1660s by a small group of Barbadian planters. Four of the colony's proprietors were members of the Royal African Company, including Sir John Colleton, who had served as the RAC's factor in Barbados during the 1660s. That South Carolina would be a slave colony modelled on Barbados from the outset is clear from the proprietors' initial proposal to the Crown: the settlers were, they pointed out, "experienced planters" and possessed "Negroes and other servants" who could perform "such labor as wil be there required." By 1680, large numbers of white Barbadians, along with settlers from London and Bermuda, had arrived in South Carolina and brought with them hundreds of enslaved people, many of whom had likely arrived in RAC ships. South Carolina's colonists could not afford to purchase large numbers of captives directly from Africa, however, because they had not yet found a staple crop to underpin a plantation economy. Initial attempts to grow tobacco and sugar were a failure, and so the settlers forced their captive workers to ranching and lumbering instead. While potentially lucrative, these pioneer industries did not employ large numbers of imported Africans. Enslaved Africans

[181] The *South Carolina Gazette* is almost complete from 1732 onwards. By comparison, there are only scattered issues for any of the British Caribbean islands before 1780, when an incomplete run of papers for Jamaica become available. Papers for Guinea factors are equally sparse for the British Caribbean islands prior to 1775. The papers of the Jamaican Bright-Meyler firm do include a long run of letters from 1732 onwards, but the collection includes few financial documents that show how they sold slaves (Morgan ed., *Bright-Meyler)*. None of the small collections of Guinea factor papers match Laurens' in terms of size and completeness before 1783, when the Tailyour Family Papers commence (TFP, WCL).

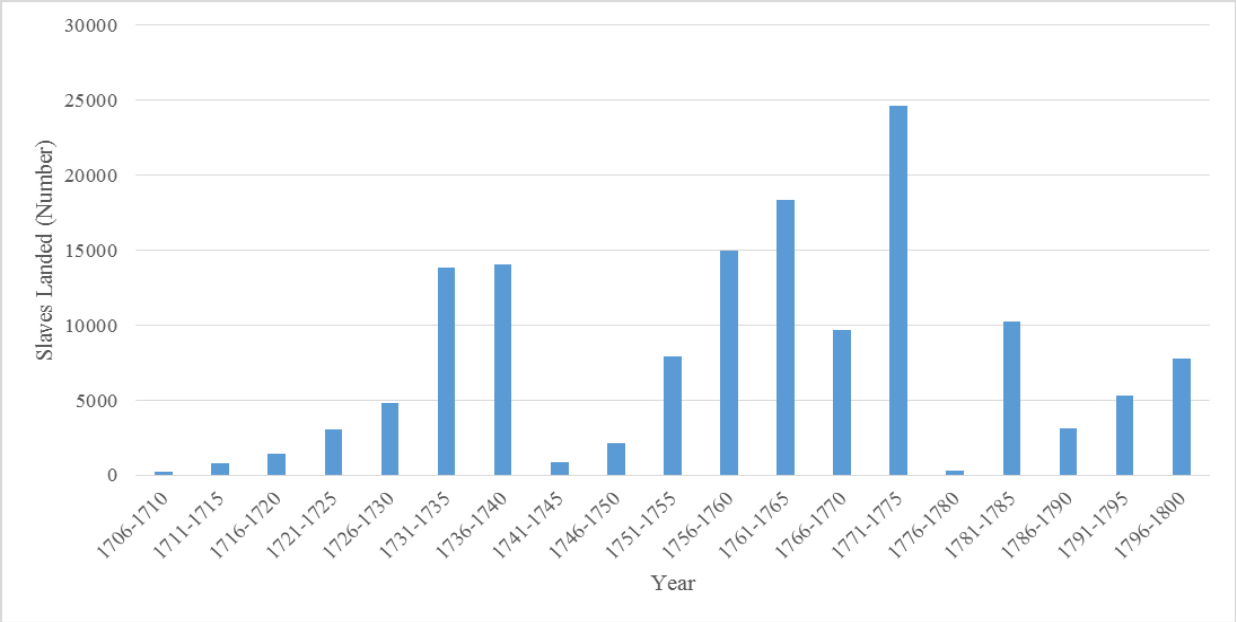
continued to arrive in small numbers from the Caribbean instead, and, as a result, no slave ship visited South Carolina directly from Africa until 1710, forty years after the colony's founding.[182]

The adoption of rice as a staple by South Carolina's planters, beginning in the 1720s, induced slave ship captains to sell their human cargoes in Charleston. The early settlers had experimented with rice cultivation but they only succeeded in forcing enslaved workers to grow the crop on large plantations during the early eighteenth century. The subsequent expansion of rice cultivation along the numerous rivers that lined the coast massively increased the planters' demand for imported enslaved workers. Slave ship captains steered their vessels toward the burgeoning colony and, during the 1720s, Charleston factors sold almost ten thousand Africans (Figure 4.2). South Carolina's planters continued to purchase increasing numbers of enslaved Africans in the 1730s at frenetic sales; when 318 Angolan captives were offered for sale from the *Morning Star* in April 1735, the planters bought them all in just two days. A writer to the *South Carolina Gazette* complained in the same year that the planters were buying "more [slaves] than they have Occasion for" or were "able to pay" for because the slave factors had offered them liberal credit. In September 1739, Angolan slaves staged an insurrection at Stono Landing, sending shockwaves through the colony. Although the rebellion was quickly crushed, it prevented thousands of other slaves from being brought to South Carolina: in direct response to

[182] For the South Carolina proprietors' membership in the RAC and the trans-shipment of captives from the Caribbean to South Carolina, see, Donnan, *Documents,* IV, pp.241, 243. For Colleton's involvement in Barbadian slave sales, see, Ibid., I, pp.88-9. For the connection between Barbados and South Carolina, see, Wood, *Black Majority,* p.14-34 ("experienced"). See also, John Peyre Thomas, "The Barbadians in Early South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 31 (1930), pp.75-92. Kinloch Bull, "Barbadian Settlers in Early Carolina: Historiographical Notes," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 96, no. 4 (October 1, 1995) pp.329–39. For early economic activity in South Carolina, see, Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, pp.1-23; Richard Waterhouse, *A New World Gentry: The Making of a Merchant and Planter Class in South Carolina, 1670-1770* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2005); E. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

the rebellion, and fears over planter indebtedness, the Assembly passed a duty on slave imports that effectively prohibited the slave trade to South Carolina until 1748.[183]

Figure 4.2: Enslaved Africans (number) disembarked in South Carolina, 1706-1785



Source: *TSTD,* estimates section, disembarkation in Carolinas/ Georgia only. The *TSTD* does not allow North Carolina and Georgia to be disentangled from South Carolina in estimates, but the voyages section shows that ships only landed approximately 16,000 Africans of the 116,000 Africans landed in this period (*TSTD,* Voyages section: Port of Disembarkation: Georgia, North Carolina).

When Charleston merchant Henry Laurens entered the Guinea factoring business in 1749, the year after the prohibitive duty on slave imports lapsed, tens of thousands of captive Africans had thus been forcibly imported into South Carolina. Laurens was born in 1724, the son of John Laurens, a slave-holding saddler of Huguenot descent, and he spent his childhood in Charleston, where he would have seen hundreds of imported Africans sold (Figure 4.3). Laurens trained as a merchant in London in his teens and returned to Charleston to work as an agent for his British

[183] For the over-extension of South Carolinian planters, see, *South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, March 9, 1735. For the sale of the *Morning Star's* captives, see, *South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, April 18, 1735; Donnan, *Documents,* IV, p.291. For the Stono Rebellion, see, Wood, *Black Majority,* pp.308-26. Between 1741 and 1748, just 1,055 Africans had been landed in South Carolina, compared to 1,134 who had been sold in 1740 alone (*TSTD,* Estimates: disembarking s in Carolinas/ Georgia, 1740-1748). For the passage of the duty on imported captives, and the response from British merchants, see Donnan, *Documents,* IV, p.274-90.

firm in 1747. Laurens sailed to London to enter a partnership in 1748, but he arrived to find that the offer had been rescinded. Knowing that the planters would eagerly purchase any Africans who were brought to the colony once the prohibition on the trade lapsed, Laurens joined with George Austin, another Charleston merchant, and formed the Guinea factoring firm Austin & Laurens. After informing British slave-trading merchants that there would be "good Sales for Negroes" in South Carolina in the coming year, Laurens sailed back to Charleston to join his partner in 1749. Two years later, he sold 106 enslaved people brought on the *Orrel* from Gambia, marking the beginning of a twelve-year career in the slave trade. When Laurens retired from the slave trade in 1763 he had sold 7,233 people—making him the second largest slave trader in colonial Charleston.[184]

[184] Henry Laurens to Foster Cunliffe, Liverpool, January 20, 1749, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.202 ("good"). Laurens lived in Charleston until 1744, when his father sent him to London to be trained as a merchant. For Laurens, see, David Duncan Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens: With a Sketch of the Life of Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens* (New York, 1915); Daniel J. McDonough, *Christopher Gadsden and Henry Laurens: The Parallel Lives of Two American Patriots* (London: Selinsgrove, 2000). Miles Brewton was the largest Guinea factor in colonial Charleston, after selling 9,067 Africans between 1757 and 1774. I have calculated the number of Africans sold by adding in a field to the *TSTD* for the name of the Guinea factor, which I obtained from newspapers advertisements and customs' house records. Laurens subsequently began a successful career as a planter and politician, and he died a rich man in 1792.

Figure 4.3: Henry Laurens in 1782

Source: John Singleton Copley, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC.

When Laurens entered the slave trade he understood that slave ship captains would only bring their human cargoes to South Carolina if he gave them sufficient encouragement, a result of the peculiar geography of the Atlantic World. The Atlantic trade winds circulated in great arcs that blew slave ships towards the eastern Caribbean and then through a string of islands, each of which was itself a slave market. British merchants ordered their captains to first touch at the eastern Caribbean, especially Barbados or Saint Kitts, to collect news from slave factors in numerous American colonies, including South Carolina. Captains used these reports to calculate where to sell their captive cargo in the Americas, seeking out the colony that could offer the highest prices for their prisoners. Slave prices were closely correlated with the prices of the tropical staples that captive Africans worked to grow: as Laurens told one slave trader in 1756, "the "price of Slaves" was "wholly influenc'd by the value of our Staples, Rice & Indigo." As a result, rice and indigo prices needed to be high enough to induce slave ship captains to sail north.

At the same time, however, the prices of slaves needed to be sufficiently low in the Caribbean to prevent slave ship captains landing slaves in the islands. The Charleston slave market was thus tied to those in the British Caribbean: a fall in planter demand in the Caribbean pushed slave ships to South Carolina; captains avoided Charleston when slave prices tumbled there.[185]

Captains also knew that the price they would receive for their captive cargo was determined by the health of the Africans, something that was affected by circumstances of the Middle Passage. If slave ship captains arrived in the eastern Caribbean with sickly and emaciated captives and found high prices there then they sold the Africans in the islands. In 1753, for example, John Newton landed his captive cargo in Saint Kitts, because, he wrote in his logbook, the male slaves' "patience is just worn out," and their health would "drop fast had we another passage to make." Captains like Newton were not motivated by humanitarian concerns. Instead, they made a chilling calculation of the financial loss they would incur if a number of their captives perished and the survivors sickened on the extra voyage. Captains also avoided Charleston if their captives had contracted small pox as South Carolina's strict laws forced infected Africans to perform a lengthy quarantine, a requirement that was not stipulated in any Caribbean colony. As Laurens told one ship captain, if enslaved Africans arriving in the Americas had "the Small pox" or "any disorder" that had "much reduce[d]" them, then they would "do much better in the West Indias [sic]" than in South Carolina.[186]

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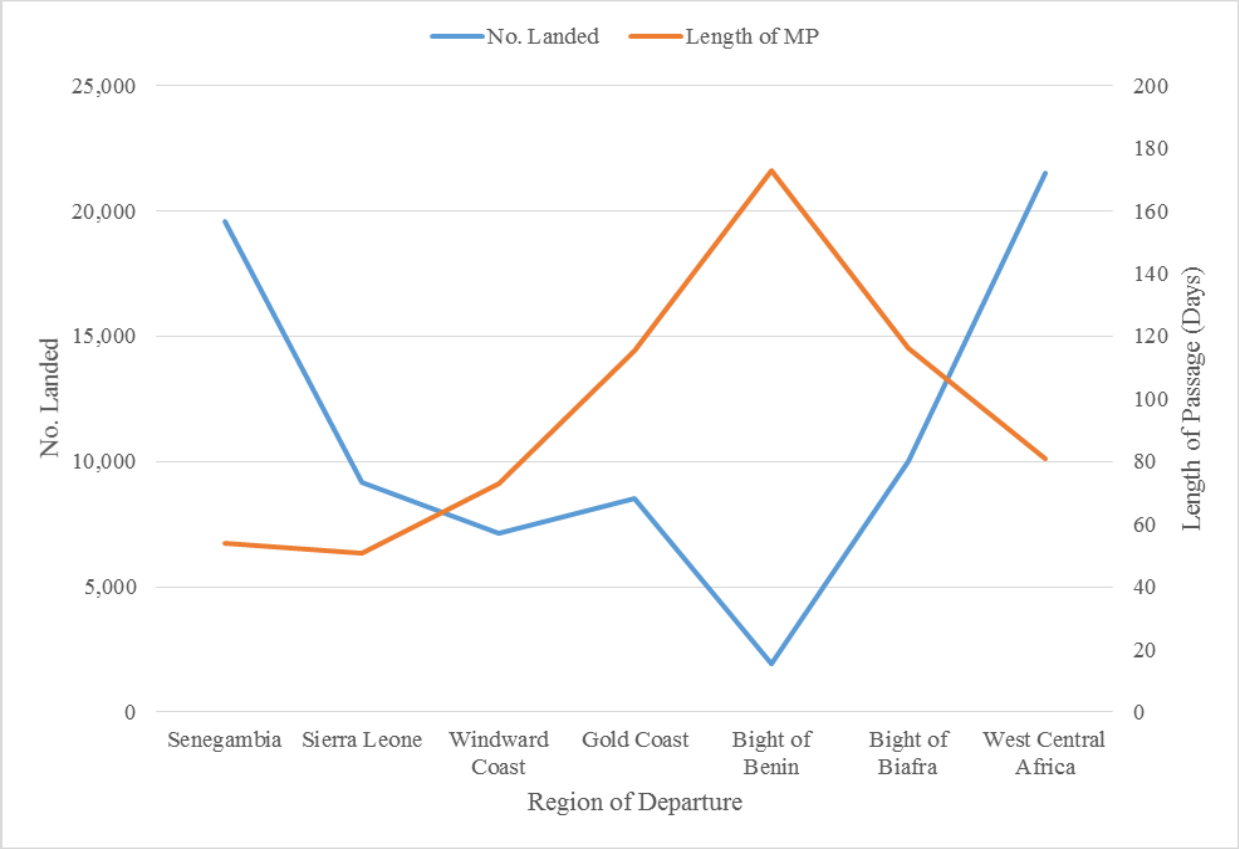
[185] Henry Laurens to Samuel Linecar, Charles Town, May 8, 1756 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.178. For the decision making process of captains when they selected American slave markets, see, Radburn, "Keeping 'the Wheel in Motion,'", pp.660–689.

[186] Logbook of the *African,* June 3, 1753, LOG/M/46, NMM. In 1755 the *Molly* was likewise obliged to "sett down" in Saint Kitts because the captain had "buried one third of his Negroes," and so couldn't proceed to Maryland (Richard Meyler II to Tilghman & Ringold, Bristol, Oct. 6, 1753, in Morgan ed., *Bright*-Meyler, 289). For captains landing slaves in the Caribbean rather than South Carolina, see for example, Henry Laurens to Thomas Mears, Charleston, December 18, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.41. No British Caribbean colony required captives to perform quarantine and so, as Laurens explained, "some [slave ships] will stop in the West Indies to avoid a Quarentine with us" (Henry Laurens to Robert & John Thompson & Co, Charleston, July 5,

Data from the *TSTD* confirms that slave ship captains steered their vessels north when they thought that their human cargoes were sufficiently healthy to survive the voyage. The numbers of enslaved people landed in Charleston from each African coastal region correlated closely with the length of the passage, one of the primary determinants of slave mortality (Figure 4.4). Thus, ships departing Upper Guinea (Senegambia, Sierra Leone and the Windward Coast), reached Charleston, on average, in just sixty days and disembarked 35,868 of the 77,802 Africans landed in the colony between 1720 and 1775. Ships sailing out of Angola, from which 21,494 Africans were disembarked, took eighty days to reach the colony. Ships from Lower Guinea (the Gold Coast, and the Bights of Benin and Biafra), by contrast, took 134 days to reach Charleston on average, and British slave traders carried just 20,440 captives from the region. Landings from the Bight of Benin—the region from which slave ships took the longest to reach South Carolina—were particularly small. Enslaved Africans arriving at Charleston also suffered lower mortality rates than captives dragged to the eastern Caribbean, despite the additional ten-day voyage, implying that captains only brought captives north who they thought could survive the voyage. Twelve percent of the Africans taken from Senegambia to Charleston, for example, perished on the Middle Passage between 1720 and 1775, compared to eighteen percent of the captives who were disembarked in the eastern Caribbean islands. The pattern of forced migration from Africa to South Carolina was thus driven both by the geography of the Atlantic World and the decisions made by slave ship captains when they elected where to direct their vessels.

1755, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.289). Henry Laurens to Captain Valentine Powell, Charleston, November 9, 1756 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.348 (“small pox”).

Figure 4.4: Enslaved Africans (number) disembarked and Average Length of Middle Passage (days) by region of departure, 1720-1775



Source: *TSTD*, Flag: British, Principal place of slave landing: South Carolina, 1720-1775.

When a slave ship did arrive consigned to Laurens he immediately selected a day for the opening of the sale based on the health of the Africans. Every captive brought to the colony had to spend a ten-day quarantine on Sullivan's Island, a sandy bar that sat opposite Charleston in the bay.[187] Africans who had suffered from infectious diseases such as smallpox spent extended

[187] As the ship entered the bay, a specially appointed "Visiting Doctor" boarded the vessel to examine the captives for symptoms of small pox, and to gain information on the health of the captives, which they subsequently passed to expectant slave traders in Charleston (See, for example, Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald & Co., Charleston, June 29, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p233). The Africans were then rowed ashore to Sullivan's Island. Pelatiah Webster, a Philadelphia merchant who visited Sullivan's Island in the period of Laurens' career described it as "about 4 miles long," and "barren, though there are some groves of trees on it." He also noted a "pest-house" with "pretty good conveniences," and "200 or 300 Negroes performing quarantine with the small pox." Laurens described the "Pest House" as the place where the captives were "placed during their Quarentine," implying that Africans had no opportunity to roam the island itself, and were instead confined indoors. Although Laurens thought that the pest house was in "good order," it was probably little more than a cramped barracks that

periods on the island prior to the sale. In June 1755, for example, 190 Africans infected with smallpox spent fifty-two days on Sullivan's Island after disembarking from the *Matilda*; and in July 1773, 100 Gambian people were kept there for just over a month after their arrival on the *Hope*, when a single boy on the vessel was infected with the smallpox. These cases were rare, however: a sample of 288 Charleston sales conducted between 1732 and 1775 shows that Africans spent, on average, twelve days on Sullivan's Island before their sale. Guinea factors also timed their sales to open on particular days of the week: none opened on Saturday or Sunday; and very few began on a Monday (10) or a Friday (17); most opened on Tuesday (78), Thursday (49), and especially a Wednesday (134). Factors timed their sales to give planters the maximum amount of time to travel to Charleston after and ahead of the Sabbath.[188]

Laurens, like other factors, used eye-catching advertisements to publicize the day of sale. (Figure 4.5). Analyzing 210 such advertisements published in the *South Carolina Gazette* between 1750 and 1775 reveals the information that Charleston factors aimed to convey to the planters. Every advertisement included the name of the slave ship and her captain, the name of the factor, the date of the sale, the number of slaves, and a stock image of healthy, grass-skirted Africans in numerous poses: standing; walking with children; carrying a bow and arrow; or leaning on a hoe and smoking. They also invariably included a description of the Africans' youth and vigor: "Choice," "healthy," "prime," "fine," "likely," and "young," were the most common

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was sweltering in the summer and freezing in the winter. Webster described Sullivans Island as being "very sandy" and "hot" in July, and Laurens wrote in January that there was "plenty of Wood" in the pest house, and that the captives had clothes, implying that Africans struggled to keep warm in the cold. For South Carolina's quarantine law, see, Donnan, *Documents,* IV, pp.298-300. For Sullivan's Island, see, Pelatiah Webster and Thomas Perrin Harrison, *Journal of a Voyage to Charlestown in So. Carolina by Pelatiah Webster in 1765* (Charleston, S.C., 1898); Henry Laurens to Gidney Clarke, Charleston, January 12, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.64.

[188] For the *Matilda's* long quarantine, see, Henry Laurens to Devonsheir, Reeve, & Lloyd, Charleston, May 22, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* p.252. For the *Hope,* see, *South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, August 2, 1773. The lengths of time that enslaved people spent on Sullivan's Island prior to their sale and the day of the sale is from *South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, 1732-1775; and occasional reports in Laurens letters.

adjectives used by factors to describe enslaved people. The advertisements are also notable for the information that they did not include. They rarely mentioned the location of the sale except in the period 1760-63, when sales were moved out of the city because of a smallpox outbreak; the locations of slave sales must have been well known to the buyers. Moreover, advertisements rarely included any description of the gender and age of the Africans, or anything that might indicate the captives were sick, besides occasional assurances that they had recovered from the small pox. Charleston factors sought, above all, to convey the impression that imported Africans were young and healthy in order to draw down as many buyers as possible to the opening day of the sale. As Laurens put it, the "success" of a slave sale depended "on the Number [of buyers] that attend."[189]

[189] Laurens also hired a man and a horse to carry printed copies of the advertisements to planters in "the remote parts of the Country," some of whom resided eighty miles distant from Charleston For the distances travelled by planters to Laurens' sales, see, Henry Laurens to Henry Weare & Co., Charleston, August 30, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.327; Henry Laurens to Law, Satterthwaite, & Jones, Charleston, January 12, 1756, Ibid., II, p.65 ("remote"). Philipp Waldeck, a Hessian chaplain who witnessed a slave sale in Kingston, Jamaica, in January 1779, noted that an enslaved crier went through the streets on the morning of the sale distributing handbills with the location of the sale (Phillip Waldeck, *Eighteenth Century America: A Hessian Report on the People, the Land, the War, as Noted in the Diary of Chaplain Philipp Waldeck (1776–1780)*, trans. Bruce E. Burgoyne (Bowie, Md., 1995), pp.104–5). Henry Laurens to Law, Satterthwaite, & Jones, Charleston, January 31, 1756, Ibid., II, p.84 ("success").

Figure 4.5: Advertisement for the sale of 212 enslaved Africans from the Snow *Thetis,* Charleston, September 1, 1756


New Advertiſements.

To be ſold, on Thurſday the 6th inſt.

A FINE healthy Cargo of TWO HUNDRED and TWELVE GUINEY NEGROES,

juſt imported in the Snow *Thetis*, *John Preſton* Commander, directly from the *Windward* and *Grain* Coaſt of GUINEY, by *Auſtin, Laurens, & Appleby.*

Source: *The South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, September 1, 1759.

Charleston Guinea factors also conveyed the African origins of enslaved people to potential buyers: of 210 adverts published between 1750 and 1775, 189 had some indication of the Africans' perceived origins. Factors vaunted the origins of slaves that embarked at Upper Guinea—whom South Carolinian planters preferred—by specifying the exact part of the coast from which the ship had sailed. Guinea factors occasionally tried to entice South Carolinian rice planters to the sale of slaves from Sierra Leone and the Windward Coast by noting that they came from the "Rice Coast" or "Rice Country." Conversely, factors knew that South Carolina planters had prejudices against enslaved people from the Bight of Biafra, and so they euphemistically described Biafran slaves as being from "Africa," or "Guiney." The regional

origin of Africans was important to the planters when they decided whether they wanted to attend a slave sale.[190]

The descriptions that factors used in their advertisements were, however, so broad as to make it almost impossible for planters to seek out enslaved people of a particular ethnicity. Just three of the 210 advertisements mentioned the actual ethno-linguistic group to which the Africans purportedly belonged. In every other case, the factor detailed the port or, more commonly, the region of the African coast from which the ship had sailed. These categories were capacious. The "Gold Coast" encompassed several hundred miles of coast and a large hinterland within which captives from numerous cultural groups were enslaved. "Angola" was even less specific: Africans sold at the myriad ports on the Angolan coast were enslaved in a 2.5 million square mile area and belonged to myriad ethnic groups. Neither did Charleston factors frequently vaunt the abilities of Africans to perform particular tasks. Just sixteen of the 210 advertisements mentioned labor that the Africans might have performed before their enslavement and no advertisement described any other task except rice. No factor promoted, for example, Senegalese slaves' ability to grow or process indigo even though it was the second largest crop grown in the colony. South Carolina colonists may have thought that the regional origin of enslaved Africans was important, but they had only a dim understanding of ethnic differences.[191]

As the day appointed for their sale approached the captive Africans were embarked on boats and rowed across the bay from Sullivan's Island, a two- to three-hour journey, and taken to the sale location. American slave sales took place at in any location that could temporarily

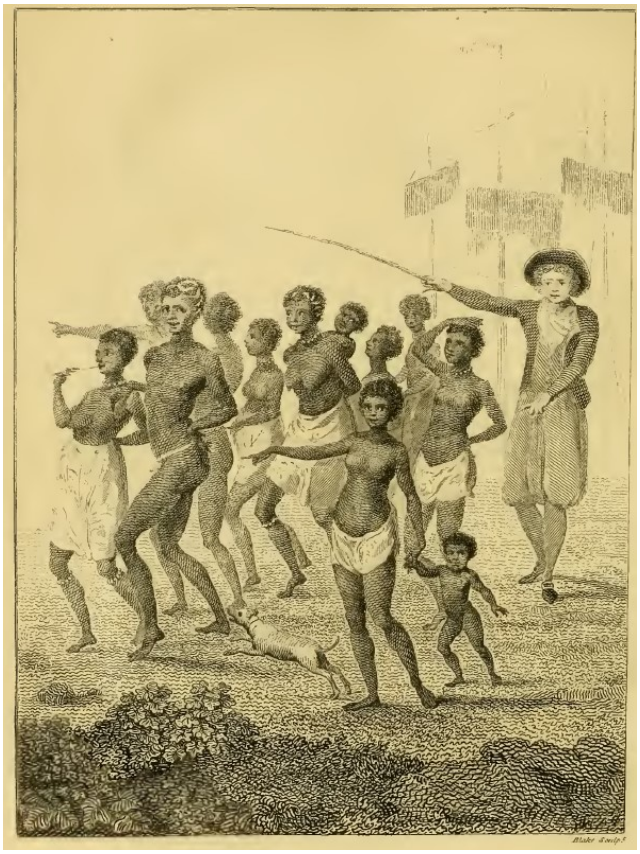
[190] For the prejudice against Biafran slaves, see for example, Henry Laurens to Jonathan Blundell & Co., Charleston, May 16, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.182.

[191] They three advertisements with the ethno-linguistic identity of the slaves were for the *Nancy* (*South Carolina Gazette,* Charleston, October 2, 1758)*, Friendship* (April 4, 1771)*,* and *Beggar's Bennison* (July 30, 1772)*,* all of which sailed from the Gold Coast. For the origins of Angolan slaves, see, Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*; Miller, *Way of Death*. For the origins of enslaved people sold on the Gold Coast, see, Chapter 1.

imprison hundreds of slaves: the slave ship, the factor's own store, a wharf, warehouse, yard, tavern, a private residence, or a plantation; in one case in 1789, several hundred slaves were sold in Jamaica at a butcher's slaughterhouse on the beach—a particularly terrifying experience for Africans who assumed that they were to be killed and eaten by white buyers. Laurens conducted his own sales in a yard somewhere in Charleston's busy commercial district, which was adjacent to the port's wharves. Potential buyers lined the route to the yard in an attempt to get a "transient view," as Laurens described it, of the Africans as they walked past, a simultaneously amazing and terrifying experience for captives who had just landed in an alien city. John Gabriel Stedman, an English soldier of fortune who fought in Surinam, witnessed one such group of captives as they marched ashore (Figure 4.6). On October 6, 1773, Stedman was returning from a visit to the Governor in a carriage, when he stopped by the water-side to "behold a group of human beings, who had strongly attracted my attention." "They were a drove of newly-imported negroes, men and women, with a few children," he wrote, "who were just landed from on board a Guinea ship that lay at anchor in the roads, to be sold for slaves." The captives were, he continued, "a resurrection of skin and bones," who appeared to be "walking skeletons covered over with a piece of tanned leather." The fact that the Africans could walk implies that they may well have been some of the healthier prisoners from the ship; many of the sick could not rise, let alone walk ashore. A sailor using a bamboo cane as a whip drove the sixty or so prisoners toward the barracks, and was accompanied by a dog who "worr[ied]" the slaves as they went by. Although Stedman's narrative describes captives arriving in the Dutch Guianas, the Africans brought ashore in Charleston were likely in similarly poor health, given the terrible conditions of the Middle Passage.[192]

[192] The sales locations are from occasional listings in the *South Carolina Gazette.* For the sale at the slaughterhouse,

Figure 4.6: "Group of Negroes, as imported to be sold for Slaves"



***Source**:* John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America; from the Year 1772, to 1777: Elucidating the History of That Country, and Describing Its Productions ... with an Account of the Indians of Guiana, & Negroes of Guinea* (London, 1806) I, p.208

Once they reached the yard, Laurens sorted and sold the Africans using the multi-staged process that the RAC's agents designed in the seventeenth century. In the first stage, he grouped the healthiest adult slaves—people "of the same stamp" as he called them—and assigned them fixed prices.[193] He next placed the Africans in their assigned groups, or "ranged [them] in order

see, Testimony of Thomas Clappeson in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.212. Those captives who were so sickly that they could not make the journey to the yard were carried to a hospital, or rowed back to the slave ship to recuperate under the care of the ship surgeon, and later offered for sale. See, for example, Henry Laurens to Law, Satterthwaite, & Jones, Charleston, January 31, 1756, Ibid., II, p.84; Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald & Co., Charleston, August 14, 1756, Ibid., II, p.283. For buyers inspecting the captives as they were being landed, see, Henry Laurens to Samuel & William Vernon, Charleston, July 5, 1756 in Ibid., II, p.238 ("transient").

[193] For the pricing of enslaved Africans by Laurens before the sale, see, Kelley, "Scrambling," pp.7-9. Henry Laurens to Law, Satterthwaite, & Jones, Charleston, December 14, 1755, Hamer and Rogers ed., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, II, p.37 ("same").

for sale," as George Baillie, another Charleston factor, described.[194] In the first stage of the sale, Laurens announced the prices to the congregated buyers, and selected people who were willing to pay the agreed upon prices.[195] He then opened the sale with a beat of a drum or the firing of a "great gun," and the planters rushed into the yard and took hold of "the most healthy and good looking Slaves," as Baillie recalled. Once they had pulled aside a group of slaves, the planters then "picked and culled" them, Baillie continued, rejecting any people they thought unable to perform plantation labor. In the second stage of the sale, Laurens sold the weakly adults and healthy children—captives who were also known as "second day slaves." Middling whites sought sickly Africans for low prices whom they tried to heal through what Laurens called "kitchen physic;" tradesmen and city-dwellers sought children to either train to a profession or employ as domestic servants.[196] In the final stage, Laurens sold the sickliest slaves. He wholesaled groups of captives to Charleston merchants who subsequently shipped them to the nearby ports of Georgetown or Beaufort, and even to distant North Carolina and Georgia. There the Africans underwent a second sale to un-creditworthy planters who could not afford to attend slave sales in Charleston itself. The few Africans who remained—people who could barely leave

[194] Testimony of George Baillie in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 73, p.182 ("ranged"). One slave ship captain told Thomas Clarkson how he had arranged the slaves for sale in Grenada in 1776. "He brought his slaves on shore, and conducted them to an area, hired and darkened for the purpose." Unlike most captains "He took care in this situation to place the husband close to the his wife, and all such together as were connected by consanguinity or attachments. He desired them to take hold of each other's hands, and to cling together as fast as they could, in order if possible that the rope, used by the scramblers, might include them all." By the captain's own admission, putting captives together with their closest shipmates was rare. "The agents only laughed at him for his humanity, told him that it would be an unusual case, and that it was his and their business to sell them to the best advantage" (Testimony of James Bowen in Clarkson, *Substance,* p.47)

[195] In August 1755, for example, Laurens informed a ship owner that he was able to "choose his Chaps" at a recent sale (Henry Laurens to Wells, Wharton, & Doran, Charleston, August 12, 1755, Ibid., I, p.314). A month earlier, he told another merchant that the "monied" planters paid high prices so that they could enter the sale on the opening day and have a "first choice" of the Africans Henry Laurens to Devonsheir, Reeve, & Lloyd, Charleston, July 31, 1755, Ibid., I, p.304).

[196] Testimony of George Baillie in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 73, p.182 ("great gun," "most healthy," "picked and culled"). For "second day slaves," see Testimony of John Knox in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.104. When Patrick Hind, a Charleston shoemaker, purchased a teenage boy from the *Concord's* sale in August 1756, for example, he knew that the boy was "very Mauger [sic]" and "full of sores." He hoped, however, to cure the boy through the "application of Proper Remedys & kitchin Physick" (Henry Laurens to Robert & John Thompson & Co., Charleston, April 20, 1757, Ibid., II, pp.523-4).

Laurens' yard, let alone make a voyage to another port, were literally "carr[ied]" to auction in Charleston and sold for small sums, closing the sale.[197]

The proportion of captives who Laurens sold at each stage of the sale depended on the health and age of the Africans when they arrived in Charleston. Laurens' account book, which includes invoices for his sale of 3,257 people from twenty-one slave ships between 1753 and 1758, details the numbers of Africans whom he sold at each stage of the sale. On average, just under half of the Africans whom Laurens sold were adults in good health; slightly over a third of the captives were healthy children or sickly adults; and nineteen percent of the Africans were unhealthy (Table 4.1). There were, however, marked differences in the proportions of enslaved people sold in each stage of the sale. The ratio of captives in the second stage of the sale fluctuated from as few as a fifth to as many as a half; the proportion of sickly slaves in the third stage ranged even more widely: from less than one in twenty to over a half. The previous stages of the Long Middle Passage: the slave purchasing strategies of slave ship captains, which shaped the age and sex of the Africans boarding ships, and the morbidity suffered by enslaved Africans on Middle Passage, therefore influenced how enslaved Africans were subsequently sold in the Americas.

[197] For the sale of Africans in Georgetown and Beaufort, see for example, Henry Laurens to Gidney Clarke, Charleston, April 5, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, pp.140-1. See also, O'Malley, *Final Passages,* pp.266-82; Paul M. Pressly, *On the Rim of the Caribbean: Colonial Georgia and the British Atlantic World* (Athens Ga., 2013), pp.112-33; Daniel C. Littlefield, "Charleston and Internal Slave Redistribution," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 87, no. 2 (April 1, 1986), pp.93–105. Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald & Co., Charleston, July 19, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.266 ("carr[ied]").

Table 4.1: Enslaved Africans sold by Henry Laurens in each stage of sale (number), 1753-1758

Year	Name	African Region of Departure	Total no. of Slaves Sold	1st Stage #	1st Stage %	2nd Stage #	2nd Stage %	3rd Stage #	3rd Stage %
1753	*Emperor*	Angola	327	150	46%	146	45%	31	9%
1753	*Orrel*	Gambia	82	52	63%	17	21%	13	16%
1753	*Africa*	Gold Coast	139	78	56%	38	27%	23	17%
1754	*Orrel*	Gambia	164	109	66%	35	21%	20	12%
1754	*Fortune*	Gold Coast	168	47	28%	83	49%	38	23%
1754	*Africa*	Sierra Leone	114	67	59%	36	32%	11	10%
1755	*Pearl*	Angola	243	152	63%	79	33%	12	5%
1755	*Orrel*	Gambia	129	76	59%	27	21%	26	20%
1756	*St Andrew*	Gambia	74	44	59%	17	23%	13	18%
1756	*Anson*	Gambia	70	35	50%	14	20%	21	30%
1756	*Hare*	Sierra Leone	63	24	38%	20	32%	19	30%
1756	*Carlisle*	Sierra Leone	110	73	66%	24	22%	13	12%
1756	*Concord*	Windward Coast	46	12	26%	21	46%	13	28%
1757	*King David*	Old Calabar	195	38	19%	55	28%	102	52%
1758	*Nanny*	Angola	247	143	58%	84	34%	20	8%
1758	*Polly*	Angola	364	138	38%	164	45%	62	17%
1758	*Rainbow*	Benin	196	122	62%	48	24%	26	13%
1758	*Polly*	Gambia	118	46	39%	36	31%	36	31%
1758	*Phoebe*	Gambia	140	91	65%	43	31%	6	4%
1758	*Molly*	Gold Coast	53	24	45%	22	42%	7	13%
1758	*Betsey*	Sierra Leone	215	89	41%	89	41%	37	17%
			3,257	**1,610**	**49%**	**1,098**	**34%**	**549**	**17%**

Source: Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, GEN MSS VOL 184, BRBML. I have determined which stage the Africans were sold in by analyzing the prices in Laurens' ledger; the date on which they were sold; and their age.

The African origin of enslaved people also shaped how Laurens organized his sales because vessels arriving from particular parts of the coast had, on average, varying proportions of healthy and unhealthy slaves, and adults and children (Table 4.2). Laurens sold proportionally larger numbers of healthy adults from ships arriving from the Senegambia and the Bight of Benin, especially compared to vessels landing slaves from the Bight of Biafra and the Gold Coast. He also vended smaller numbers of children from Gambia, compared to Sierra Leone/

Windward Coast, the Gold Coast, and Angola. Although Laurens only sold one shipload of enslaved Africans from the Bight of Biafra (the *King David)* his notes on the sales invoice indicate that many enslaved Africans from that region arrived in Charleston sickly and even on the verge of death. When Laurens had 112 of the *King David's* captives remaining after the first day of the sale on September 13, 1757, he wrote in his accounts that "almost all" of the remaining slaves were "swell'd or other ways disorder'd." Given that different classes of buyers purchased slaves in each stage of the sale, the ultimate destination of enslaved people was hence shaped by their regional origin: planters bought proportionally higher numbers of healthy adults from Senegambia and Benin; tradesmen purchased large numbers of Gold Coast and Angolan children; and factors sent more Biafran slaves to auction, or sold them to merchants.[198]

Table 4.2: Enslaved Africans sold by Henry Laurens in each stage of sale by region (number), 1753-1758

African Region of Departure	No. of Voyages	Total no. of Slaves Sold	**1st Stage**	%	**2nd Stage**	%	**3rd Stage**	%
Gambia	7	777	453	58%	189	24%	135	17%
Sierra Leone/ Windward Coast	5	548	265	48%	190	35%	93	17%
Gold Coast	3	360	149	41%	143	40%	68	19%
Old Calabar	1	195	38	19%	55	28%	102	52%
Benin	1	196	122	62%	48	24%	26	13%
Angola	4	1,181	583	49%	473	40%	125	11%
		3,257	**1,610**	**49%**	**1,098**	**34%**	**549**	**17%**

Source: Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, GEN MSS VOL 184, BRBML.

[198] Accot Sales… of 195 new Negroes Imported p the Ship King David…, Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, GEN MSS VOL 184, BRBML, ff.140-2, 142. The health and ago of enslaved people arriving from different parts of the African coast in Charleston might also explain the South Carolina colonists' preferences for particular groups of Africans. "The Slaves from the River Gambia," Laurens told a British slave trader, "are preferr'd to all others with us" (Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald, Charleston, May 17, 1756 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.186). "Gold Coast or Gambias are best," Laurens wrote, "next to them the Windward Coast are prefer'd to Angolas." (Henry Laurens to Smith and Clifton, Charleston, July 17, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.295) "Few of our planters will touch Calabar Slaves when Others Can be had," he wrote to another correspondent. (Henry Laurens to Jonathan Blundell & Co., Charleston, May 16, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.182).

The slave sales organized by factors like Henry Laurens thus shaped the forced migration pattern of slaves to individual colonies, and the subsequent destinations of Africans within those colonies. Laurens tried to induce slave ship captains to steer their vessel to Charleston by advertising the slave prices that he could obtain through his sales. Ship captains elected to take up Laurens' offer when they believed that their captive cargo could survive another ten days at sea in relatively good health. Captains who arrived in the Americas after proportionally shorter voyages from ports in Upper Guinea and Angola therefore steered their vessels north, shaping the pattern of forced migration to the colony. Laurens then sold the Africans to colonial buyers using the RAC's multi-staged process: he first sold the healthiest adult slaves to planters; then he vended the children to middling whites; and finally he sold the sickliest captives to merchants. The African origins of enslaved people had a significant bearing on their fate in the Americas, not because colonists sought captives from particular ethno-linguistic groups—as some historians have argued—but because American slave traders sold Africans according to their age and health, something that was shaped by the Long Middle Passage.

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Focusing on the voyage of the *Count du Norde,* a British vessel that disembarked 571 men, women and children in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1784, illustrates precisely how the individual processes of the Long Middle Passage helped to determine the destinations of enslaved Africans in the Americas. The *Count du Norde* is one of the best-documented slave-trading voyages in the entire eighteenth century, albeit one that historians have not studied. Thanks to a financial dispute between the owners, the correspondence for the vessel are extant, including a detailed invoice that describes the sale of the Africans. Miraculously the logbook for the voyage also survives in a separate collection, one of just thirty from almost twelve thousand

British slaving voyages. The *Count du Norde* was admittedly atypical in its size: at almost five thousand square feet, it was the largest ship ever to land Africans in South Carolina, and one of the largest British slave ships ever to visit the African coast. Yet it is also representative because the slaves who were carried on the vessel experienced a similar sales process as millions of other Africans who were carried to the Americas.[199]

London merchants Samuel Hartley and Miles Barber fitted out the *Count du Norde* to gain from the disruptions caused by the American Revolutionary War. In 1781 and 1782, British merchants had made what one Liverpool slave trader called "golden voyages" in the trade by dispatching slave ships to the African coast where they purchased large numbers of captives, crammed them into the holds of their ships, and sold the survivors in the Americas at a spectacular profit. Barber and Hartley hoped to get a share of these profits. On June 19, 1783, Barber travelled to the British naval yards in London and purchased HMS *Oiseau,* a naval frigate that had recently fought American privateers off the coast of Newfoundland. Barber renamed the ship *Count du Norde* and appointed experienced Liverpool captain James Penny to the command. Barber ordered Penny to trade on the Loango Coast, a region of West Central Africa that had been visited by few slave ships following the collapse of France's slave trade after its entry into the American Revolutionary War in 1778. In the absence of other ships, Barber and Hartley assumed that Penny would be able to purchase an incredible thousand enslaved Africans.[200]

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[199] The logbook for the *Count du Norde* is in Ships' logs of HMS Agamemnon, Count du Nord and Mampookata (1 vol: 1782-1785), 387 MD 62/1, Liverpool Record Office. The *Count du Norde's* papers are in Baillie & anr v Hartley: exhibits re SS Comte du Nord and slave trade: schedule, correspondence (Penny and Barber, Ball, Jennings & Co. to Hartley), accounts, E219/377, TNAUK. The *Count du Norde* was 146'3" long; and 34'1" across the beam, and drew 15'3" of water. She therefore dwarfed almost every British slave ship launched in the eighteenth century.

[200] Thomas Hodgson to Richard Miles, Liverpool, February 18, 1783, T70/1549/2, CMTA, TNAUK. Another group of Liverpool merchants named their ship *Golden Age* in this period, presumably because of the "unheard-of wonders" that the slave trade was doing for their pocketbooks in this period. For the profits earned by British slave

On September 29, 1783, the *Count du Norde* put out from London and, after a sixty-six day passage, she dropped anchor at Malimba, the largest slaving port on the Loango coast. When Penny arrived at Malimba, he was horrified to find sixteen French captains competing with each other for the captives arriving from the interior. Like their British counterparts, French captains used a tiered system of prices to manage competition and obtain increasing numbers of healthy slaves the closer they came to leaving the coast. As the French author of a 1783 guide to trade on the African coast wrote, captains sought adult slaves who were "well made & healthy, between 16 and thirty years old" who they classified as *pieces de indies,* the equivalent designation to a "prime" slave. The price of a man designated as a *piece de indies* then determined the price of healthy women between fifteen and thirty, and children aged five to fifteen. Because ship captains were "jealous against each other" and bid up the price of slaves, they "put a moderate price on the first" slaves that they bought, because the "first price serves to regulate all those the ship trades." Once a ship was "half slaved," or had a *moiete de traite* as French captains called it, they increased the prices they offered for slaves, enabling them to get off the coast quickly.[201]

Penny positioned himself at the bottom of the hierarchy of captains at Malimba and consequently purchased large numbers of enslaved children. When Penny arrived at Malimba, the captains nearing their departure were paying between fifteen and sixteen pieces (the currency on the Loango coast) for a healthy male slave, while the "new arrivals" were paying twelve

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trading merchants in the early 1780s, see also, J. E. Inikori, "Market Structure and the Profits of the British African Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* 41, no. 4 (1981): 745–76; David Richardson, "Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade: The Accounts of William Davenport," in *Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition*, eds. Roger Anstey and Paul Hair (Liverpool: 1976), pp.60-90. HMS *Oiseau* was originally a fifth-rate French naval frigate named *L'Oiseau,* which was launched from La Rochelle in 1769. In 1779, she was captured by HMS *Apollo,* refitted, and then put into service with the British navy. For the capture of *L'Oiseau* by HMS *Apollo,* see, "Captured ship: L'Oiseau, master M. le Chevalier de Tarade. Nationality: French ship of war," HCA32/416/5, TNAUK. For Miles Barber, see Melinda Elder, *Slave Trade and the Economic Development of 18th-Century Lancaster*, (Halifax: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pp.148-50. Between 1770 and 1778, French ships carried off approximately ten thousand Africans from ports in the region ever year; British ships purchased just over a thousand slaves a year in the same period (*TSTD).*

[201] Chambon, *Traite General,* II, p.401.

pieces, as one Frenchman who traded alongside Penny at Malimba explained to his vessel's owner. Penny originally hoped to pay between six and seven pieces for slaves but, according to the same Frenchman, he raised his price to nine pieces and took slaves who had been "refused by the other" captains. Penny would not purchase sickly or aged slaves and so he initially bought "little boys and girls" who eventually made up just over half of his human cargo. As he neared his departure from the coast, Penny increased his prices again and purchased young adults. By May 30, 1784, when Penny finally pulled up the anchor he had bought 705 people, twenty-seven of whom had died before the vessel even pushed out for sea.[202]

Penny's original orders told him to sail from Malimba to Saint Christopher's where he was to collect reports from factors and then proceed to Cuba under false colors to sell his slaves. While Penny was still on the coast in March 1784, however, Barber wrote a new set of orders and sent them to Saint Christopher's to meet Penny, which directed him to sail to Charleston, South Carolina instead. The slave sales in Charleston had, Barber wrote, been "truly great" because of the recent war, during which plantations had been burned, slaves had fled to opposing lines in large numbers, and Loyalists had been ejected from their lands, along with their bondsmen. As one Liverpool firm excitedly wrote in September 1783, the planters in South Carolina "want an amazing number of Negroes, which they will have as fast, or faster, than they can pay for them."[203] Barber hoped to oblige South Carolina's planters by ordering the enormous

[202] For Penny's passage to the coast, see, Ships' logs of HMS Agamemnon, Count du Nord and Mampookata (1 vol: 1782-1785) , 387 MD 62/1, Liverpool Record Office. For the competition Penny faced on the coast see, Testimony of James Penny in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.37. Francois Vanstabel to Bonaventure Tresca, Malimba, December 14, 1783, Le Musée Des Beaux-Arts De Dunkerque; Francois Vanstabel to Bonaventure Tresca, Malimba, January 20, 1784, Le Musée Des Beaux-Arts De Dunkerque. Penny had originally been ordered by his owners to purchase "choice, healthy young negroes" (Samuel Hartley & Co. to James Penny, London, September 20, 1783, E219/377, TNAUK). Penny wrote from Malimba shortly before his departure that the slaves were "very sickly" and that he had "buried thirteen already" with "twenty four down in the Flux" (James Penny to Miles Barber, Malimba, May 22, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK).

[203] For Penny's original orders, see, Samuel Hartley & Co. to James Penny, London, September 20, 1783, E219/377, TNAUK; Samuel Hartley & Co. to James Penny, London, September 22, 1783, E219/377, TNAUK. For Penny's

Count du Norde to Charleston with almost seven hundred people—the largest human cargo ever to be brought to South Carolina.

Figure 4.7: The ship *Count du Norde's* route from Africa to the Americas, May 30-July 1, 1784

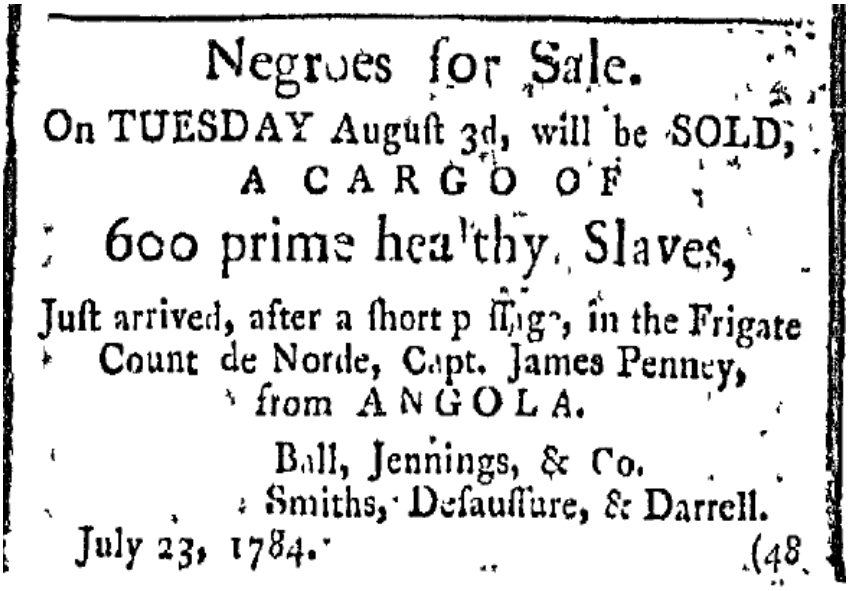
Source: Ships' logs of HMS Agamemnon, Count du Nord and Mampookata (1 vol: 1782-1785), Liverpool Record Office, 387 MD 62/1, with coordinates plotted onto Google Earth.

Soon after the *Count du Norde's* departure from the coast, the Africans began to sicken and die in large numbers (Figure 4.7). A day out, a young boy died of the flux and, over the next ten days, eight other captives perished from the same disease. Seventeen days into the hellish voyage, measles infected three hundred of the slaves killing "six & seven slaves per day," as Penny told Barber. By the time the vessel reached Saint Christopher's after thirty-three days at sea, seventy of the 674 people who had been carried from the coast had died, a mortality rate that was slightly higher than the average for the period. Although the *Count du Norde's* slaves could

updated orders, see, Miles Barber to James Penny, London, March 11, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK. John & Thomas Hodgson to Richard Miles, Liverpool, September 28, 1783, T70/1549/1, CMTA, TNAUK.

see land the Middle Passage had not ended. Penny rowed ashore to collect his new orders and some provisions and then immediately hauled up the anchor for Charleston. Eight days later the *Count du Norde* arrived off the coast of Charleston, but was unable to reach the store due to contrary winds. With the assistance of the slaves at the sails, the ship pulled into the harbor seventeen days after first arriving in the Americas—half the time it took the ship to cross the Atlantic—a voyage that cost the lives of an additional thirty-five people.[204]

Figure 4.8: Advertisement for the sale of the ship *Count du Norde's* enslaved Africans, July 23, 1784



Negroes for Sale.

On TUESDAY Auguſt 3d, will be SOLD,

A CARGO OF

600 prime healthy Slaves,

Juſt arrived, after a ſhort paſſage, in the Frigate Count de Norde, Capt. James Penney, from ANGOLA.

Ball, Jennings, & Co.
Smiths, Deſauſſure, & Darrell.

July 23, 1784. (48

Source: *South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, SC, July 27, 1784

On July 21, 1784, the *Count du Norde* finally pulled into Charleston harbor and Penny went ashore to meet Ball, Jennings, & Company, a Charleston slave-factoring firm who

[204] For the mortality suffered by the *Count du Norde's* slaves on the Middle Passage, see, Ships' logs of HMS Agamemnon, Count du Nord and Mampookata (1 vol: 1782-1785), May 30-June 10, 1784, Liverpool Record Office, 387 MD 62/1. See also, Testimony of James Penny in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 68, p.37; James Penny to Miles Barber, Saint Christopher's, July 1, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK. For the *Count du Norde's* voyage from Saint Kitts and arrival at Charleston, see, Ball, Jennings & Co. to Samuel Hartley & Co., Charleston, July 23, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK; James Penny to Miles Barber, Charleston, July 24, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK. In a similar case in April 1755, the ship *Emperor* proceeded all the way to Charleston, but was stuck off the bar for eight days by a strong gust of wind which, according to Henry Laurens, "destroy'd him a good many Slaves." The *Emperor* sailed to Jamaica, where 270 of the 360 Africans who survived the voyage were sold (Henry Laurens to Walter Caddell, Charleston, Aug. 15, 1755 in Hamer and Rogers eds, *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.318).

organized the sale. Immediately after learning of the *Count du Norde's* arrival Jennings and his partners advertised the sale, which would commence on August 3, 1784, by vaunting the health of the captives and their "short passage" from Angola (Figure 4.8). The advertisement gave no indication of the sale location but, given the *Count du Norde's* size, it likely took place on the ship itself, which would have been anchored either at a wharf or in Charleston harbor; potential buyers would certainly have had no difficulty seeing the massive frigate in the harbor.[205]

The sales invoice for the *Count du Norde* shows that it followed the three-stage process employed by slave factors throughout the British Americas. Prior to opening the sale, Ball & Jennings sorted the Africans into groups and priced the healthiest adults (Figure 4.9): they valued men at £70 sterling; women at £60; and children for prices that varied according to their age and height. The oldest boys were priced as high as £65 and the youngest for as little as £45; girls sold for between £55 and £45. In the first stage of the sale, which stretched over three days, 119 people purchased 355 of the Africans, typically in groups of five or more (Table 4.3). Adults were almost all sold in this stage of the sale: of the 246 adults who survived the voyage, 129 were taken away on the first day, and sixty-two on the second—three-quarters of the total adults. Less than a third of the children were sold in the same period. In the second stage, fifty-six buyers visited the ship over eleven days and purchased groups of ten people or less, especially

[205] Richard Downing Jennings was born in Bermuda, but immigrated to the Dutch island of Saint Eustatius in 1766 where he purchased hundreds of enslaved people from Dutch and English ships, and then re-exported them to Spanish Puerto Rico. In 1783, he re-located to Charleston to sell enslaved Africans from arriving slave ships using the financial backing of a Scottish slave factoring firm based in Grenada. For Ball, Jennings & Co., see, Miles Barber to James Penny, London, March 11, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK; Richard Downing Jennings, *The Case of Richard Downing Jennings an English Subject, who resided at Saint Eustatius…* (London, 1790). Being "entire strangers" in South Carolina Ball & Jennings partnered with Smith, Dessausure & Darel in Charleston, "an old established house" that had "never been in the Guinea Line" before (James Penny to Miles Barber, July 24, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK). For shipboard slave sales in this period, see for example, the *Betsey* (*South Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, May 6, 1784); *Two Brothers* (Ibid., May 13, 1784); *Louisa* (Ibid., July 29, 1784); *Molly* (Ibid., October 14, 1784); *James* (Ibid., September 23, 1784); and *Mentor* (Ibid., May 30, 1785).

children. Finally, in the last two days of the sale, just four men bought all the remaining slaves for low prices, most of whom were children, closing the sale (Figure 4.10).[206]

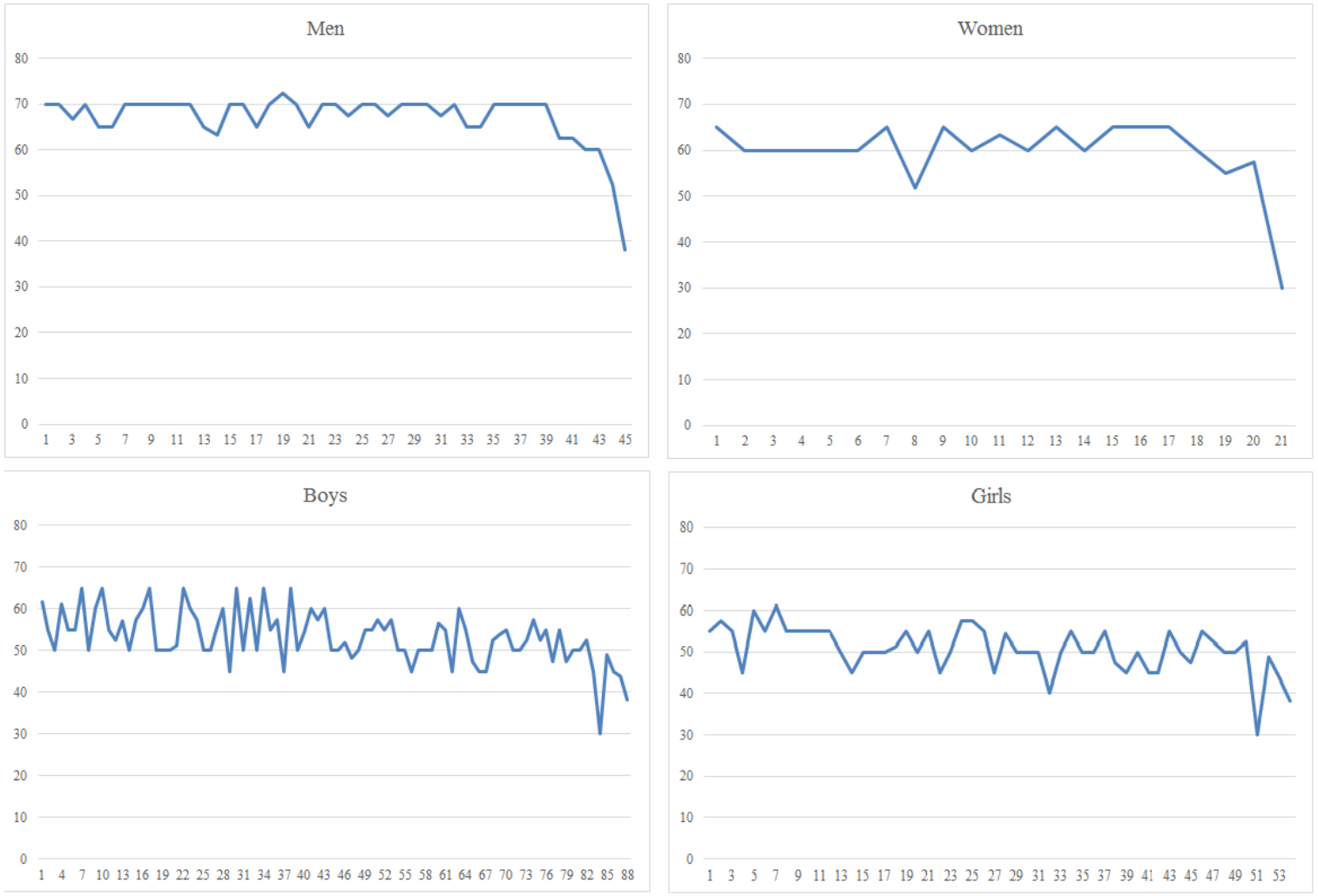
Table 4.3: Buyers (number) and enslaved Africans sold (number), ship *Count du Norde*, August 3- August 19, 1784

Date	Day	Buyers (#)	Slaves Sold (#)	Lot Size (Number of people)			
				1	**2-5**	**6-10**	**>10**
August 3rd, 1784	Tuesday	54	188	8	64	35	81
4th	Wednesday	37	100	9	48	23	20
5th	Thursday	28	67	5	39		23
6th	Friday	8	34	3	3	8	20
7th	Saturday	21	59	3	23	6	27
9th	Monday	5	15	1	4	10	
10th	Tuesday	4	5	1	4		
11th	Wednesday	6	7	3	4		
12th	Thursday	4	6		6		
13th	Friday	2	4	1	3		
16th	Monday	4	26	1	2		23
17th	Tuesday	2	3	1	2		
18th	Wednesday	1	20				20
19th	Thursday	3	29				29
			563				

Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

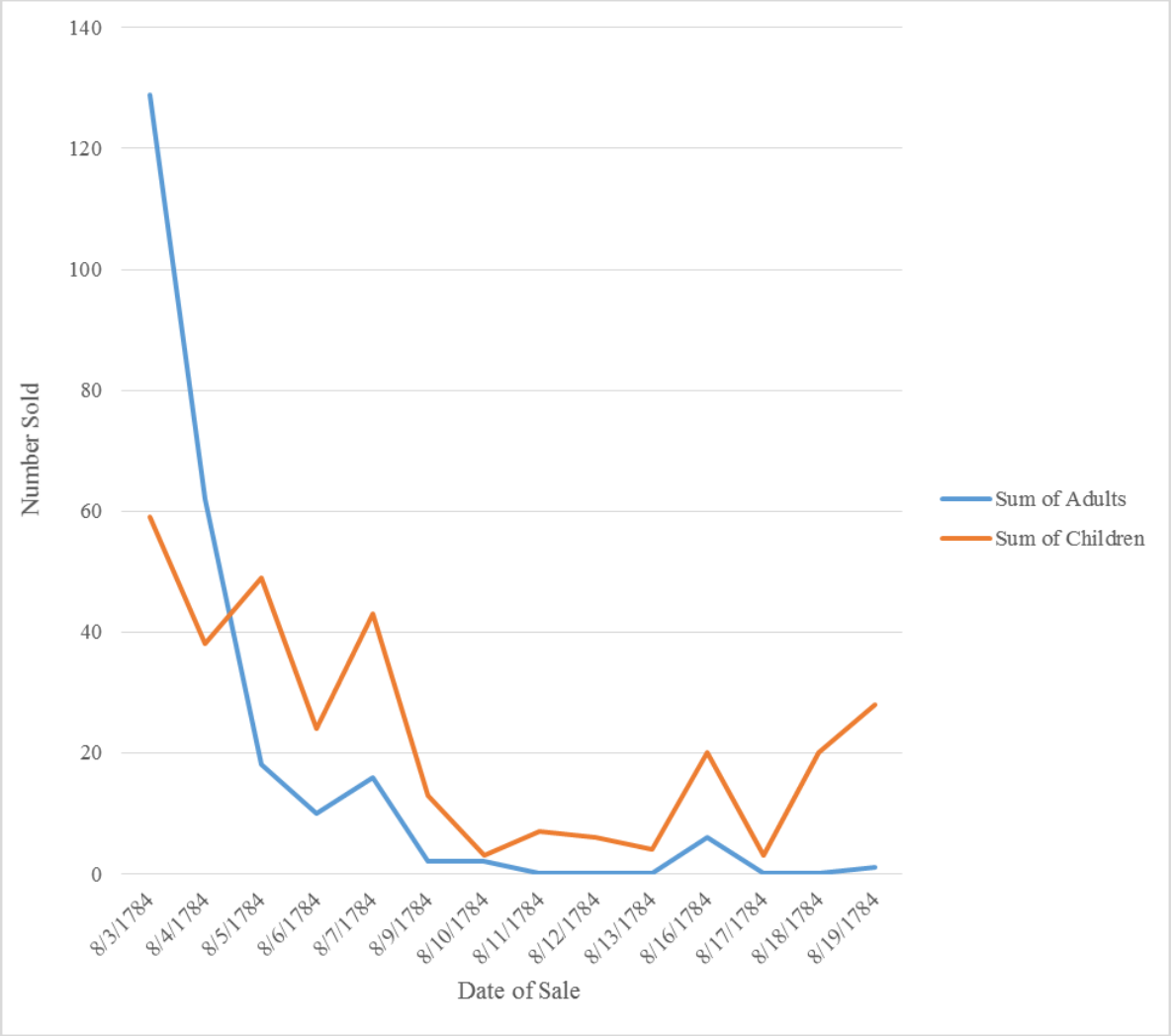
[206] For the *Count du Norde's* sale invoice, see, "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

Figure 4.9: Prices paid (Pounds Sterling) for 168 enslaved men, 81 women, 86 boys and 36 girls, ship *Count Du Norde*, August 3-August 19, 1784



Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

Figure 4.10: Sale of 246 enslaved adults and 317 children, ship *Count du Norde*, August 3-August 19, 1784



Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

Different classes of buyers bought either adults or children. Planters overwhelmingly purchased adults: 153 of the 172 buyers for which occupation can be ascertained (Table 4.4). Planters did purchase ninety-nine of the children, but the buyers of fifty-eight of these youths lived in towns, implying that they may have bought them to work as domestics, rather than as plantation laborers. The non-planter purchasers of children worked in a wide variety of professions: carpenters, bricklayers, shoemakers, shop-keepers, grocers, butchers, vintners, and

ship-wrights all bought enslaved children, presumably to train them as apprentices or employ them as servants. Eighty-two percent of the adults were subsequently marched into the countryside, some far from Charleston: sixty-two of the adults went to the plantation parishes of Prince William, Saint Bartholomew, and Saint Helena over forty miles from Charleston (Figure 4.11). Charleston residents bought just thirty-five of the adults, or fifteen percent of the total. The children went to different locations. Charleston residents bought 122 children, or half of those for which the buyer's address can be found (Figure 4.12). Other buyers took the remainder in small groups to the parishes, especially to towns. Merchants from distant towns bought the fifty sickly children who remained at the end of the sale, probably to later resell them: George Wade, a trader from Lancaster bought twenty of the children on August 18 and, the next day, a group of three merchants from Georgia bought the remaining twenty-nine slaves.[207]

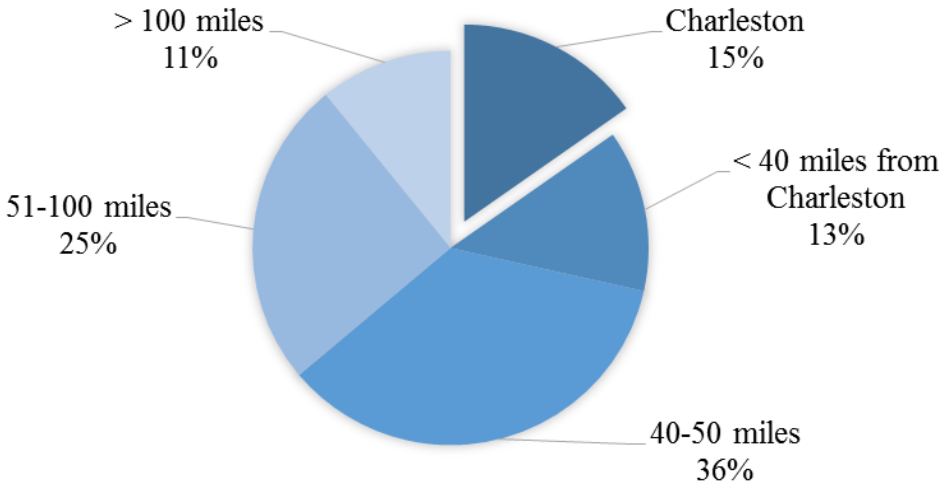
Table 4.4: Occupations of the buyers of 246 enslaved adults and 259 children, ship *Count du Norde,* August 3- August 19, 1784

	Planter	Tradesman	Sub-Total	Unknown	TOTAL
Adults	153	19	172	74	246
Children	99	93	134	125	259
	52%	**48%**			**563**

Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK. The fact that so many of the purchasers of the other children could not be identified also indicates that they may have been people with few resources.

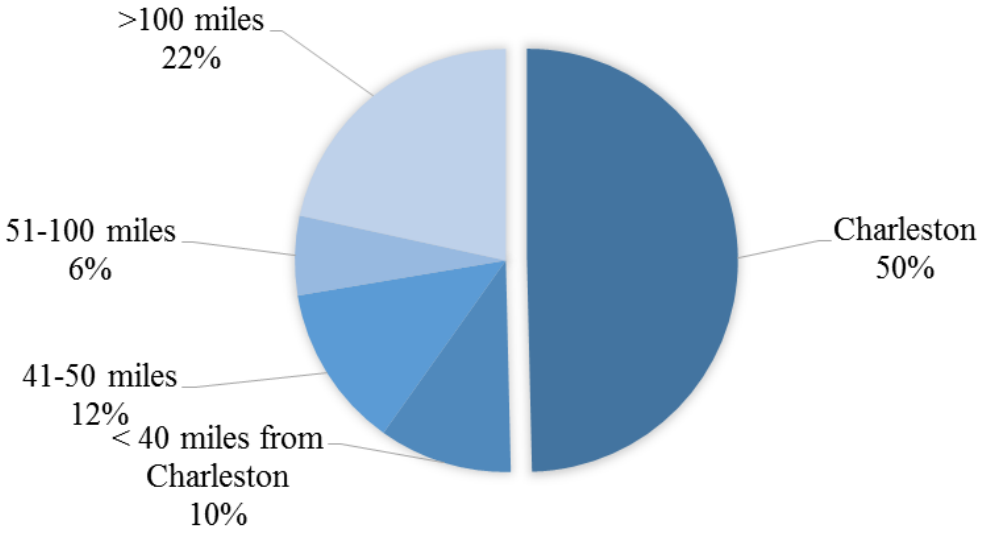
[207] I have ascertained the identities of the slaves' buyers by cross-referencing their names with the Charleston directories, which can be found in James W. Hagy, *People and Professions of Charleston, South Carolina, 1782-1802* (Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1999).

Figure 4.11: Destinations of 228 enslaved adults sold from the Ship *Count du Norde,* August 3- August 19, 1784



Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

Figure 4.12: Destinations of 251 enslaved children sold from the Ship *Count du Norde,* August 3- August 19, 1784



Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK

Cross-referencing the names of the slave buyers with the Charleston city directory for 1790, shows where 137 of the 166 slaves sold to Charleston residents went in the city. Plotting

the results on a 1788 map of the city shows that the newly arrived Africans were concentrated in the populous commercial center of the town, near the wharves on the eastern side of the city—the sites where ship loads of slaves were sold (Figure 4.13). The majority of the *Count du Norde's* Africans lived with at least one of their shipmates, seemingly for long periods: in his 1803 will George Buckle, a ship carpenter who bought three boys mentions three "ship carpenters Sam, Jemmy, and Jacob"—very likely, the three boys he bought from the *Count du Norde* together. Most of the people who were sold to Charleston residents would have had an opportunity to see their shipmates as they ran errands for their masters in the small, walkable city, or in their free time in the evenings and on Sundays. Adults were not alone either: all but nine of them were sold along with one or more of their shipmates, and the majority were sold in groups of five or more.[208]

[208] Charleston County Wills, xxIx (Charleston, SC, 1800—1807).

Figure 4.13: Destinations of 137 Africans sold from the Ship *Count du Norde* in Charleston, August 3- August 19, 1784

Source: "Account Sales of 563 Slaves received by the Ship Count du Norde, Captn James Penny, from Angola," E219/377, TNAUK; *Iconography of Charleston, South Carolina…* (London, 1788).

The case of the *Count du Norde* illustrates in microcosm how the process of sale in the Americas was influenced by every previous stage of the Long Middle Passage, and consequently the enslaved Africans' experience of their enslavement. When Penny traded at Malimba, he knew that he was purchasing slaves who he would subsequently sell to selective American planters who would only pay high prices for healthy adults and children. The French captains who Penny competed with for enslaved people employed the same strategy but offered higher slave prices. Penny consequently purchased a disproportionately large number of enslaved children and young adults, each of whom was subjected to numerous inspections and separations. Penny's desire to find what he called "good sales" in the Americas also molded where the Africans were sold in the Americas. A sudden surge in the planters' demand for slaves in South Carolina induced Penny to haul his vessel away from Cuba, where the captives would have originally landed, to Charleston.[209]

The Africans who survived the hellish ocean voyage to Charleston were subsequently forced to take a number of different paths into American slavery. Healthy adult Africans marched to distant rice and indigo plantations, while the children remained in Charleston, or were taken to other towns to work as apprentices or servants. Their sickly shipmates, by contrast, were loaded on boats and taken to neighboring states. American slave sales were hence predicated on the basis that Africans had to be separated from each other to ensure that colonial buyers obtained the captives they wanted. Even so, most of the *Count du Norde's* Africans maintained connections with their shipmates after their sale: some lived in Charleston under the same roof, others were on the same street or within a few hundred yards of each other in the

[209] Penny may well have taken the Africans to another colony instead if the price of slaves in Charleston had fallen. Barber ordered him to avoid Charleston if "that Market is either glutted" or the "Prices so reduced as to render it imprudent to face it." Miles Barber to James Penny, London, March 11, 1784, E219/377, TNAUK

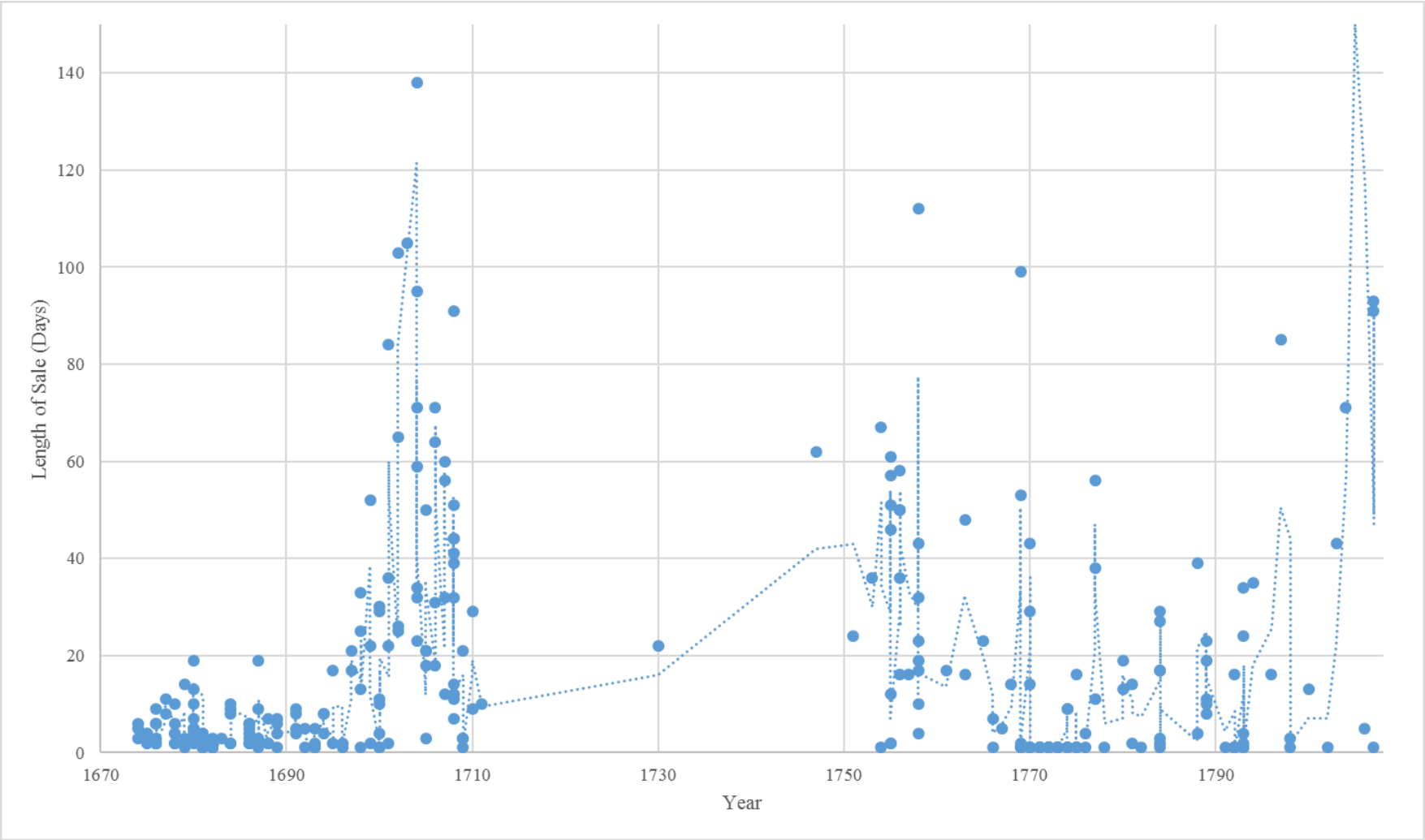
small city; and captives in the countryside worked alongside large groups of their shipmates. American slave traders forced enslaved people to take different paths into American slavery according to their age and health. But some captive Africans also managed to remain with the people with whom they had shared the ordeal of the Long Middle Passage.

*

To date, historians have tended to emphasize the speed and violence of slave sales, usually by drawing on abolitionist tracts that described the terrifying single-day "scramble sale". In the most recent analysis, Sean Kelley used Henry Laurens' papers and claimed that the scramble was the "the preferred sales mechanism for newly arrived Africans" in Charleston. Analyzing the invoices for 282 British-American slave sales conducted in a variety of colonies between 1674 and 1808 reveals, however, that the average length of a slave sale was twenty-one days (Figure 4.14). The "typical" slave sale was evidently not a scramble. But breaking down the sample shows that scramble sales did take place: fifty-eight sales (twenty-one percent of the total) were concluded in a single day (Table 4.5). A further ninety sales (thirty-two percent) were completed within a week; and one in five sales took over a month, almost as long as the Middle Passage itself once the time in port is included. Slave sales were much more drawn out than historians have previously believed.[210]

[210] Kelley, "Scrambling," p.1. See, for example, P. C. Emmer, *The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500-1850* (Berghahn Books, 2006), p.83; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 152–53; Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers*, 59–61.

Figure 4.14: Lengths of slave sales in the British Americas (days), 1672-1807 (n=282)



Source: The Royal African Company's "Invoice Books- Homeward" details sales on 133 voyages between 1673 and 1711 in three different areas of the Caribbean: Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. The Invoice Books are in CMTA, TNAUK, T70/936-956. The records of 149 slaves sold by private merchants during the eighteenth century are scattered among numerous disparate collections. Ninety-two of the invoices are in the papers of William Davenport, Liverpool merchant (*The Papers of William Davenport and Co., 1745-1797*; D/DAV, MMM). Nine invoices are in the papers of the Jamaican firm Case & Southworth, (MD33-36, LRO) and 19 in the invoice book of Austin & Laurens (Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, GEN MSS VOL 184). Smaller collections of British merchant papers contain the records of between one and five sales, but they are too numerous to list.

Table 4.5: Lengths of 282 British American slave sales (days), 1674-1807

1 day	2-7 days	8-14 days	15-31 days	>31 days
58	90	37	42	55
21%	32%	13%	15%	20%

***Source**:* See Figure 4.14

The lengths of slave sales also fluctuated considerably both over time, and between individual colonies. The RAC usually concluded its sales within a week in the 1670s and 80s, with sales in the small islands in the eastern Caribbean typically concluded faster than in Jamaica. The RAC's sales lengthened to over a month in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the War of Spanish Succession threatened the British Caribbean islands. The lengths of sales in the second half of the eighteenth century varied so much that it is difficult to generalize: some were concluded within a day, especially before and after the American Revolutionary War; others took months. The lengths of slave sales even in a single year could vary enormously between colonies: in 1805, for example, a shipload of slaves was sold in a single hour in Jamaica, while 350 Africans were sold over an eight month period in the Bahamas, even though both ships left the African coast around the same time.[211]

Contrasting slave sales in both South Carolina and Jamaica in the period of Laurens' career illustrates this variety. The business records of the Kingston slave-factoring firm Case & Southworth show that their sales rarely closed in less than a month between 1754 and 1758. In the very same period, Henry Laurens sold human cargoes, on average, within thirteen days and, on many occasions, in a single day via the scramble (Table 4.6). Africans who arrived at Jamaica

[211] For the sale in the Bahamas, see, Thomas Leyland & Co., Account Book of the Ship *Fortune* (1805-1807, 387 MD 44), Liverpool Record Office. For the one-hour sale, see, Thomas Samson to Henry Goulburn, Aug. 1, 1805, in "Papers Relating to the Jamaican Estates of the Goulburn Family of Betchworth House," *BRRAM* (Wakefield, U.K., 2008), 304J/1/12/10(a).

or South Carolina at the same moment spent very different periods in a sale as a result. In May 1755, for example, the ship *Adlington* arrived at Kingston with 136 Africans consigned to Case & Southworth, who sold the captives over a fifty-seven day period. On June 24, 1755, while eight of the *Adlington's* Africans still languished on the ship, Henry Laurens prepared to "go to Work" and sell 243 Angolan slaves brought to Charleston on the ship *Pearl*. He expected to make a "glorious Sale" of the captives as over a hundred potential buyers crowded outside the yard. Laurens announced the prices to the assembled crowd and then, after a cannon shot, they surged into the yard. When the chaos had subsided, all but thirteen of the *Pearl's* Africans had been "ran off" in the scramble sale; the next day, Laurens sold thirteen of the remaining captives for cash. Laurens thus sold all of the *Pearl's* slaves in just two days, while some of the *Adlington's* captives were still stuck aboard the ship in distant Jamaica, having been there for a month.[212]

The length of time that captives spent awaiting sale in American colonies varied so widely because the planters' demand for imported Africans rose and fell with the prices of tropical staples on the world market. Jamaican slave factors sold captives over long periods in the 1750s because the planters' demand for new workers waned as sugar prices tumbled. The price of sugar on the London market had surged during the late 1730s, and again in the late 1740s, but had collapsed at the peace in 1749, from forty-two shillings per hundredweight in 1747, to just twenty-seven shillings in 1750. Although the price of sugar recovered and stabilized around thirty-five shillings over the course of the 1750s, it remained low enough to make

[212] Sales of 136 Negroes being the Ship Adlington's Cargoe…, Sales account book from Kingston, Jamaica, 1754–60, Case & Southworth records, 380 MD 35, LRO f.47. For the *Pearl's* sale, see, Henry Laurens to Devonshire, Reeve, & Lloyd, Charleston, June 24, 1755, Hamer and Rogers ed., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.268. Henry Laurens to Peter Furnell, Charleston, June 12, 1755, Ibid., I, p.262 ("glorious,"). Henry Laurens to Devonshire, Reeve, & Lloyd, Charleston, June 24, 1755, Ibid., I, p.268 ("ran off")., Accot sale… of 243 new Negro Slaves receivd p the Ship Pearl…, Austin & Laurens Account Book April 1750-December 1758, , GEN MSS VOL 184, BRBML ff.91-93, 93 ("sick & refuse").

planters reticent to purchase new workers or expand cultivation; in 1749, a Kingston factor advised his slave trading partners in Britain that, "slaves are and will be very low [in price]." In the first half of the eighteenth century, Jamaican slave traders had re-exported thousands of captives to the neighboring Spanish colonies. The re-export trade all but halted in 1750 when the Spanish government canceled the *asiento*, which had granted British merchants a legal monopoly on the re-export of Africans from Jamaica to the Spanish colonies. Without the *asiento,* and with weak demand from sugar planters, Jamaican slave factors found it difficult to sell hundreds of people quickly during the 1750s.[213]

[213] Henry Bright to Richard Meyler II, Kingston, July 25, 1749, in Morgan, ed., *Bright-Meyler Papers*, p.217 ("slaves"). For the "glutted," Jamaica market, see also Jeremiah Meyler to Henry Bright, Savannah-la-Mar, March 9, 1751, in Ibid., p.236. For the ending of the *asiento,* see Ibid., p.226, n.182. For the number of captives exported from Jamaica, see O'Malley, *Final Passages*, pp.361-64. For the price of sugar, see Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p.497.

Table 4.6: Slave sales organized by Austin & Laurens, Charleston, and Case & Southworth, Kingston, 1753-1758

Austin & Laurens (Charleston, SC)						**Case & Southworth (Kingston, Jamaica)**					
Year	Month	Vessel Name	Captives sold	% sold on Day 1	Number of days to complete sale	Year	Month	Vessel Name	Captives sold	% sold on Day 1	Number of days to complete sale
1753	Aug.	*Africa*	163	100	1						
1753	Sept.	*Emperor*	327	100	1						
1753	Sept.	*Orrel*	82	100	1						
1754	July	*Fortune*	168	100	1	1754	Apr.	*Judith*	274	0.7	67
1754	July	*Orrel*	164	100	1						
1754	Sept.	*Africa*	114	100	1						
1755	June	*Pearl*	243	94.3	2	1755	Mar.	*Bulkeley*	196	33.2	12
						1755	May	*Adlington*	136	16.9	57
1755	Sept.	*Orrel*	129	78.3	15	1755	Sept.	*Judith*	192	1.0	51
						1755	Oct.	*Swallow*	101	10.9	46
						1755	Dec.	*Swan*	297	5.7	61
1756	Apr.	*Anson*	70	100	1	1756	Mar.	*Young Foster*	202	5.9	58
1756	June	*Hare*	63	36.5	15						
1756	July	*Carlisle*	136	44.4	25	1756	July	*Tryton*	72	2.8	50
1756	Aug.	*Concord*	46	41.3	16						
1756	Sept.	*St. Andrew*	74	56.8	50						
1757	Sept.	*King David*	195	41	16						
1758	May	*Rainbow*	196	67.3	32	1758	Jan.	*Young Foster*	268	7.5	112
1758	Jun.	*Polly*	364		25						
1758	July	*Polly*	118	62.7	4						
1758	Aug.	*Betsey*	215	46	19						
1758	Oct.	*Molly*	53	26.4	23						
1758	Oct.	*Nanny*	247	45.7	11						
1758	Oct.	*Phoebe*	140	63	17						
			3,307	**75**	**13**				**1,738**	**17**	**57**

Source: Adapted from Kelley, "Scrambling," 14. Sales account book from Kingston, Jamaica, 1754–60, Case & Southworth records, 380 MD 35, LRO

South Carolinian planters bought Africans at frenetic sales in the early 1750s, by contrast, because they received high prices for their staples on the world market. In the late 1740s, South Carolinian colonists started growing indigo in substantial quantities as "[a]n excellent colleague Commodity with Rice," a shift that was subsidized by a parliamentary bounty on the crop. Between 1750 and 1758, the price of indigo constantly increased and indigo exports from Charleston grew almost ten-fold. Calculating planters knew that if they could obtain new workers—purchased from Laurens on credit—they could grow more indigo and obtain quick profits. As Laurens wrote in August 1755, during the height of the indigo boom, "the great call for Slaves just now is to help People in their Indigo many of whom have planted more than they can work." Indigo planters therefore flocked to Laurens' slave sales: at the sale of the *Pearl's* 243 Africans in June 1755, Laurens reported that he had could have sold twice as many slaves to the buyers present; when the *Prince George's* 260 slaves were offered for sale a month later, Laurens excitedly told a British merchant that there had been enough colonists present to purchase a thousand slaves. Between 1753 and 1755, Laurens sold seven shiploads of Africans to these violent hordes of buyers who literally scrambled over each other to obtain workers for their plantations.[214]

A sudden plunge in the price of staples could just as quickly dampen the colonists' demand, stretching the period of time that Africans spent on sale. In the summer of 1755, while Laurens was still selling Africans by the scramble news began to trickle into Charleston that

[214] Quoted in Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint,* 159 ("excellent"). Henry Laurens to Corsley, Rogers & Son, Charleston, August 1, 1755, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, 307-8 ("great call"). For the number of buyers at the sale of the *Pearl's* Africans, see, Henry Laurens to Robert & John Thompson & Co, Charleston, July 5, 1755, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* I, p.289. For the buyers at the sale of the *Prince George's* captives, see, Henry Laurens to Thomas Easton & Co., Charleston, July 31, 1755 in Ibid., I, pp.306-7. In 1750, the Charleston price of best-copper indigo was 2.74 shillings per pounds, and South Carolina exported 63,100lbs of the product. In 1758, the price was 3.57 shillings per pound, and 563,000lbs of the crop were exported (R.C. Nash, "South Carolina indigo, European textiles, and the British Atlantic economy in the eighteenth century," *Economic History Review*, 63, 2 (2010), 371).

Britain and her colonies would soon be at war with France. Laurens knew that in wartime "the demand for Slaves cannot be half so great with us as in times of Peace" because the prices of rice and indigo would plunge, while the cost of shipping crops back to Britain would soar. From 1756 until 1758, all war years, Laurens advertised his sales in the same way, but many planters refused to travel to town to buy captives in uncertain times. Those few buyers who did come to Laurens' sales attempted to beat down slave prices. In July 1756, for example, Laurens wrote that he had a "tollerable Shew of People," at the sale of the *Carlisle's* Africans, "but it Soon appear'd they would not buy without a Considerable abatement from the former prices." "With much to do," he continued, "we got them to give £235 for about 20 of the best men, then were Obliged to lower to £225, & so by degrees down to 200." In the same month, Laurens told the owner of the *Concord,* that "[t]he planters wont come near us unless they are mearly haul'd along" to the sale. Sudden lurches in the prices of crops on the world market, or political changes in distant London or Paris could fundamentally change the speed at which enslaved Africans were sold in the Americas.[215]

Captive Africans experienced slower sales differently than the frenetic and violent "scramble." Witnesses to scramble sales recalled that the captives "shriek[ed] through excess of terror," and "clung to each other in agonies." Some fell "prostrate upon their faces" while others were so "terrified" that they "climbed over the walls of the court yard" and "ran wild about the town." When smaller numbers of purchasers appeared, Africans were subjected instead to excruciatingly thorough bodily inspections. At the sale of the *Concord's* Africans in August 1756, for example, the planters refused to purchase many captives because they inspected them

[215] Henry Laurens to John Holden, Charleston, June 19, 1755, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.227 ("demand"). Henry Laurens to Augustus & John Boyd & Co., Charleston, July 30, 1756, Ibid., II, p.272. Henry Laurens to John Knight, Charleston, July 12, 1756, Ibid., II, p.250 ("tollerable," "with much"); Henry Laurens to Robert & John Thompson & Co., Charleston, July 24, 1756, Ibid., II, p.269 ("planters").

closely and found them to be "full of defects." Africans dragged to Jamaica in the same period spent months enduring the daily misery of such inspections, while trapped in a slave factor's yard or aboard a slave ship. In January 1758, for example, 268 Africans forcibly imported to Jamaica in the *Young Foster* spent 112 days—almost four months—on sale aboard the ship in Kingston harbor. When eighty-one people were disembarked from the *Venus* at Kingston in March 1757, the factors could find few buyers in Kingston, and so shipped them round two weeks later to Savanna-La-Mar, a small town on the west side of the island. Finding little demand there, the captain marched the *Venus'* Africans to Lucea, and then Montego Bay led by a "negro guide," a thirty-five-mile journey over rough terrain. By August, all of the captives had been sold, but only after suffering through a five-month odyssey around Jamaica during which they were constantly inspected by potential buyers.[216]

The only contemporary painting of a slave sale indicates what these more drawn out sales may have looked like (Figure 4.15). The painting depicts the French slave ship *Marie Seraphique* riding at anchor in Cap Francais, Saint Domingue, on the opening day of the slave sale on Thursday, January 14, 1773. Buyers are being ferried out to the vessel and ascend a set of stairs leading to the main deck. The ship is still divided in two by the barricado, and a lavish meal has been laid out on a table beneath an awning for the buyers. The colonists are carefully inspecting captives on the main deck, and then leading them through the barricado door to the quarterdeck, where they are negotiating with the slave factor, under the awning aft, a process that could continue for several months.

[216] Falconbridge, *Account*, p.45 ("shriek[ed]", "prostrate"). Henry Laurens to Richard Oswald & Co., Charleston, August 14, 1756, Hamer and Rogers eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens,* II, p.283 ("full). Sales of 268 Negroes Imported in the Snow Young Foster…, Sales account book from Kingston, Jamaica, 1754–60, Case & Southworth records, 380 MD 35, LRO, ff.99-100. Jamaica accts forward, 1757, Samuel and William Vernon, 1756-1799, 1756-1799, Slavery Collection, 1709-1899, NYHS, Series 1, Sub-Series 2, Box 2, Folder 15 ("Negro guide").

Figure 4.15: "View of Cap Francais and the *Marie Seraphique* of Nantes, Captain Gaugy, the day of the opening of its sale, third voyage from Angola, 1772, 1773"

Source: http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/detailsKeyword.php?keyword=marie%20seraphique&recordCount=1&theRecord=0

An individual's experience of sale thus differed remarkably depending on when and where they were forcibly landed in the Americas. The typical slave sale was not a single day scramble sale but an ordeal that dragged out for three weeks, around half the length of the Middle Passage once the time that Africans spent in port is included. Yet economic and political shifts in individual American colonies could rapidly alter the planters' demand for enslaved laborers, altering the speed of sales. Africans arriving in South Carolina shortly before the Seven Years' War were seized by colonists at a violent scramble sale; captives taken to Charleston just a year later were subjected to intimate and humiliating bodily inspections by alien white colonists over a much longer period. Enslaved people who were disembarked in Jamaica at precisely the same moment spent months trapped aboard ships, or were marched around the island in search of elusive buyers. While Guinea factors throughout the Americas sold enslaved Africans using similar methods, the specific circumstances of an individual's sale was rarely the same.

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Examining slave sales in a comparative perspective prompts a reconceptualization of the African experience of their enslavement after the Middle Passage. The first sight of land did not mark the end of the Middle Passage because the British Americas was a complicated series of interlinked slaving markets through which captains navigated their vessels as they searched for lucrative sales. Captains sought, above all, to obtain the highest prices for their human cargoes, and they forced enslaved Africans to undertake voyages that could last several additional weeks. Cruising through the Americas strained the health of exhausted people who had been trapped aboard a crowded slave ship for several months, resulting in further debilitation and death. Neither did arrival at an American port signal the end of an African's imprisonment. Slave factors delayed the opening of their sales for one to two weeks, a time when the Africans were trapped either on the ship or in a yard ashore. Even before enslaved people were offered for sale, then, they had typically spent several weeks within the Americas, a formative period for Africans who had just arrived in a strange land from a long oceanic voyage. Sales were also potentially drawn-out processes. Guinea factors did organize single-day scramble sales, especially when the planters' demand for enslaved workers reached a fever pitch. The average American slave sale was a much more protracted affair. Most took several weeks, but they could stretch out to several months when the planters' demand collapsed. The period between an African's arrival in the Americas and their eventual sale was much more drawn out than historians have previously believed.[217]

[217] When the slave ship *Hudibras* arrived at Barbados from Old Calabar in 1788, for example, the Africans "eagerly surveyed it from the deck," a sailor on the ship later wrote. After departing Barbados, the vessel ran alongside Saint Vincent and Grenada, "whose fertile fields presented to view numerous groups of slaves at work." The "sight of so many of their own countrymen excited the liveliest emotions of pleasure in our slaves" (William Butterworth, *Three Years Adventures of a Minor in England, Africa, the West Indies, South-Carolina and Georgia* (Leeds, 1831), p.132). For the landing of enslaved people ashore prior to their sale, see also, Richardson, *Mariner of England,* pp.64-5.

American sales also shaped the subsequent fates of enslaved Africans. On average, one in five of the Africans who arrived in the Americas was in poor health, a proportion that varied considerably depending on the particular circumstances of the Middle Passage. Between twenty and thirty percent of the other captives were children, depending on the ship captain's purchasing strategies and the region of Africa at which the captain traded. Guinea factors anticipated this fact and sorted Africans according to their physical attributes, and then channeled them to colonial buyers along the social spectrum. The healthiest adult slaves therefore marched from port to plantation soon after the opening of a sale, while their sickly and adolescent shipmates remained behind to face very different fates: middling whites purchased healthy children to work as apprentices as servants in the towns; and sickly captives spent even longer periods trapped in a Guinea factor's yard before speculators bought them. As many as half of the enslaved Africans brought to the Americas may have taken very different routes into slavery than the plantation slaves that have been the focus of so much scholarly attention to date.

The African origins of enslaved people played an important role in determining their forced migration to particular American colonies, and their subsequent destination within those colonies. As the abolitionist James Ramsay wrote after a long residence in Saint Kitts, "all slaves are shipped [from Africa] in good health," but "from a tenth part to a third, or perhaps a half," of the Africans brought to the Americas were "found to be diseased, and are sold as refuse." The "Length of the Passage, and the Breaking-out of any epidemic Disorder among them" was what determined the proportion of sickly slaves, Ramsay rightly concluded.[218] These factors were molded, in part, by the peculiar geography of the Atlantic World, which resulted in greater numbers of enslaved people arriving in the Americas in poor health from certain African coastal

[218] James Ramsay, *Objections to the abolition of the slave trade* (London, 1788), pp.70-71. See also, Testimony of James Ramsay in *Report of the Lords,* pp.141-42.

regions, such as the Bight of Biafra. The proportion of children entering the slave trade at various coastal ports was, likewise, determined by the particularities of the internal African slave trade and the decisions of slave ship captains. The African origins of enslaved people had a significant bearing on their fate in the Americas, then, not necessarily because colonists sought captives from particular ethno-linguistic groups—as some historians have believed—but because American slave traders sold Africans according to their age and health.

Chapter 5- Seasoning in the Americas

After their sale, Africans began the long and arduous process of seasoning. Thomas Clarkson gives perhaps the best definition of seasoning as "the time which an African must take to … endure the common labor of a plantation." "[T]he seasoning is over," Clarkson continued, when "the survivors are thus enabled to endure the usual task of slaves." Planters thus seasoned Africans to hard labor, a process that numerous West Indian authors described in guides to plantation management. In 1750, Barbadian planter Samuel Martin published his influential *Essay on Plantership*, in which he laid out the principals of "the art of managing a sugar plantation to the best advantage." Enslaved people were, Martin pointed out, the "nerves" of the plantation and a planter "ought… to treat" them "with tenderness and generosity." Fellow Barbadian Doctor James Grainger wrote in his 1764 essay on *Common West Indian Diseases* that recently purchased Africans should be "managed with the utmost humanity." "To put a hoe in the hands of a new Negroes, and to oblige him to work with a seasoned gang," Grainger bluntly stated, "is to murder that Negroe." "The African must," Grainger continued "be familiarized to labour by gentle degrees" and only after "at least a twelvemonth" period could they "be said to be seasoned." Jamaican planter John Dovaston penned a lengthy 1774 essay in which he likewise advised sugar planters to treat Africans as "guests and not as slaves," by "begin[ning] them with easy labour" for twelve months. Doctor Collins, a "professional planter" in Jamaica, told the readers of his *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves* that Africans should be "assimilate[d]" into the slave labor force." Planters should, he cautioned, "encourag[e]" not "comp[el]" Africans to perform work by offering rewards and never having

"recourse to stripes," so that they would be "gradually trained to habits of labour and obedience."[219]

This chapter demonstrates that seasoning was not a single process, however, because colonists from across the social spectrum purchased enslaved Africans, and then subjected them to different seasoning regimes. This chapter focuses on late eighteenth century Jamaica, the economic heart of the British plantation system. At 4,450 square miles in area, the island was larger than all of the other British Caribbean islands combined and, by the mid-eighteenth century, it accounted for half of Britain's total sugar imports. Jamaica was, as a result, by far the single largest destination for captive Africans forcibly transported to the British Americas: for every enslaved person landed in South Carolina, almost five arrived in Jamaica during the period 1701-1775. The papers of Jamaican planters are also extensive, and include diaries, letters and accounts that shed unique light on the seasoning process.[220] Focusing on Golden Grove, a large absentee-owned sugar plantation, shows how healthy adults were seasoned after their sale. The

[219] Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species…* (London, 1786), p.139. Samuel Martin, *An Essay upon Plantership* (Antigua, 1750), pp.9, 14. Martin's essay was so popular that it went through at least four editions between 1750 and 1765. James Grainger, *On the Treatment and Management of the More Common West-India Diseases* (London, 1764), p.11. For similar sentiments in verse, see, Grainger, *Sugar-Cane*. John Dovaston, "Agricultura Americana, or Improvements in West-India Husbandry Considered. Wherein the Present System of Husbandry Used in England Is Applyed To the Cultivation or Growing of Sugar Canes to Advantage," 1774, John Carter Brown Library, Providence RI, pp.253-4. See also, Dr. Collins, *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves, in the Sugar Colonies,* (London, 1803). See also, Peter Thompson, "Henry Drax's Instructions on the Management of a Seventeenth-Century Barbadian Sugar Plantation," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (2009), pp.565–604; Gordon Turnbull, *Letters to a Young Planter; Or Observations on the Management of a Sugar Plantation* (London, 1785); Edwin Lascelles et al. *Instructions for the Management of a Plantation in Barbadoes. And for the Treatment of Negroes* (London, 1786); Patrick Kein, *An Essay upon Pen-Keeping and Plantership* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1796); Phillip Gibbes, *Instructions for the Treatment of Negroes* (London, 1797); Clement Caines, *Letters on the Cultivation of the Otaheite cane: the manufacture of sugar and rum; the saving of melasses; the care and preservation of stock; with the attention and anxiety which is due to Negroes…* (London, 1801). "New Negroes" was the term almost universally used in Jamaica to describe unseasoned African slaves. Barbadian planters sometimes referred to Africans as "Saltwater Slaves," and Virginians called them "outlanders," but these were not popular terms in Jamaica.

[220] For Jamaica's economic prosperity, see R. B. Sheridan, "The Wealth of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century," *Economic History Review* 18, no. 2 (1965), pp.292–311; Peter A. Coclanis, "The Wealth of British America on the Eve of the Revolution," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 1990), pp.245–60; Trevor Burnard, "European Migration to Jamaica," *WMQ* 53, no. 4 (October 1996), pp.769–96; Trevor Burnard, "'Prodigious riches': The Wealth of Jamaica before the American Revolution," *Economic History Review* 54, no. 3 (August 2001), pp.506–24.

attorneys for absentee-owned sugar estates did attempt to season enslaved people through a carefully designed regime. However, the absentee's insistent demand to maintain high production levels meant that overseers forced Africans to harbor labor soon after they arrived on a plantation. Examining the diaries of Thomas Thistlewood shows how individual enslaved Africans experienced their seasoning on medium sized sugar plantations and livestock pens. Thistlewood employed different methods to break men and women to plantation labor, and so enslaved Africans had varying experiences of their seasoning. Reconstructing Jamaica's internal slave trade demonstrates the very different fates of sickly Africans after their sale. These captives spent weeks and even months within a large and well-organized slave trade, whereby merchants marched them across the island and attempted to sell them to middling colonists. By examining, for the first time, the terrible mortality rates suffered by these captives, this chapter concludes that historians need to revise their estimates of the human cost of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the Americas.

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During the eighteenth century, Jamaica's slave population exploded due to a massive expansion in plantation agriculture and a simultaneous surge in the volume of the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the island. Prior to 1700, British slave traders had disembarked 66,000 enslaved people in Jamaica, most of whom labored on plantations in the parishes adjoining Kingston. After 1700, the volume of the slave trade to Jamaica expanded almost every decade as colonists pushed sugar monoculture into new lands in the island's eastern and western parishes. In the 1720s alone, British slave traders sold 75,000 enslaved Africans in Jamaica—more people than had been landed in the entire seventeenth century. By 1770, approximately 190,000 enslaved people toiled in Jamaica, of whom 150,000 worked on sugar plantations, a population that

needed to be constantly replenished by importations of Africans because of over-work and demographic imbalances. The case of Golden Grove plantation illustrates how several hundreds of these Africans experienced their seasoning.[221]

Golden Grove was situated in Saint Thomas in the East, one of the most productive areas in Jamaica thanks to the Plantain Garden River, which ran through the parish, carrying with it fertile mud and sediment. Despite the region's fertility, British colonists did not settle the Plantain Garden River valley until the early eighteenth century because of the threat of runaway and rebellious slaves in the nearby mountains and forests. To open the region to settlement the Jamaica Assembly offered in 1721 to purchase the vacant, absentee-owned lands that lined the river. The Assembly appointed Andrew Arcedeckne, the Anglo-Irish attorney general for the island, as a commissioner to survey and purchase the plots. Arcedeckne used his privileged position to pick out 1,925 acres of the best land and, in 1734, he consolidated the plots to form Golden Grove. Arcedeckne's estate was one of the largest plantations in Jamaica: only a tenth of Jamaican landholders possessed estates the size of Golden Grove; the median Jamaican sugar plantation covered six hundred acres. Golden Grove was exemplary of what Edward Long later described as the "finest sugar-plantations" in Jamaica and indeed the British Caribbean.[222]

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[221] The volume of the slave trade is from *TSTD,* Estimates: Disembarkation in Jamaica 1660-1808. The slave population grew, according to Higman, from 10,000 to 45,000 people between 1673 and 1703 (B. W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (University of the West Indies Press, 2001) p.8). For the expansion of the slave population by parish in the mid-eighteenth century, see, Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man*, p.34. Philip D. Morgan estimates, based on data in Edward Long's history of Jamaica, that there were 190,000 slaves in Jamaica in 1770, and that "150,000 slaves labored on sugar plantations, another 17,000 on specialized pens, and 14,000 on ranches or small crop farms" ("Slaves and Livestock in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: Vineyard Pen, 1750-1751," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1995), pp.47–76).

[222] For the fertility of the Plantain Garden River and the size of sugar plantations in Jamaica, see, Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica. . . .* (London, 1774), II, pp.167–68. "An act to encourage the settling the north-east part of this island- [22d July, 1721.]" in *The Laws of Jamaica: 1681-1759*, 2nd ed. (Spanish Town, Jamaica: Alexander Aikman, 1802) I, pp.131-37. The act pointed out that substantial land grants had been granted by Charles II along the Plantain Garden River, but the "greatest part of the tract of land" was "wholly unsettled." For Andre Arcedeckne, see, Betty Wood, T.R. Clayton, and W.A. Speck, "The Letters of Simon Taylor of Jamaica to Chaloner

Andrew Arcedeckne died in August 1763 and Golden Grove passed to his twenty-year-old son Chaloner who departed Jamaica for Britain and immediately urged his attorney, Simon Taylor, to increase production. When Chaloner Arcedeckne inherited the estate both the size of its enslaved workforce and its production had fallen considerably since his "Father's time," when 540 slaves had produced 508 hogsheads of sugar.[223] The 312 slaves remaining on the plantation on January 1, 1767, (when Taylor took an inventory of the plantation) had been worn down by overwork, which had progressively increased as people grew old, became incapacitated, or died. Sugar production had simultaneously fallen to just three hundred hogsheads a year. To support his genteel lifestyle in Europe, Arcedeckne ordered Taylor to immediately increase sugar production. What Arcedeckne's "expectations," as Taylor called them, of output were is not clear, but he likely sought around five hundred hogsheads or more a year, given the plantation's previous output. To calculate precisely how many new workers were required to meet Arcedeckne's "expectations," Taylor used a system of formulas that linked the number of slaves to the acres of land under cultivation, and ultimately the output of sugar in hogsheads. Taylor then informed Arcedeckne of the need to purchase slaves of a specific gender and then, when he received approval, he attended slave sales in Kingston.[224]

Arcedekne, 1765–1775," *Camden Fifth Series* 19 (July 2002): p.7, n.1). Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, pp.219-231. For Golden Grove, see, B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750–1807: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2008), pp.137–46; Betty Wood and T. R. Clayton, "Slave Birth, Death and Disease on Golden Grove Plantation, Jamaica, 1765–1810," *Slavery & Abolition* 6, no. 2 (September 1, 1985), pp.99–121. The papers for Golden Grove are available on microfilm, see, Simon Taylor Papers, TVAP, *PLC*.

[223] For Simon Taylor and Chaloner Arcedeckne, see R. B. Sheridan, "Simon Taylor, Sugar Tycoon of Jamaica, 1740–1813," *Agricultural History* 45, no. 4 (October 1971), pp.285–96; Wood, ed., "Letters," p.19, n.5. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, February 25, 1770 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.87.

[224] "A List of Negroes belonging to Golden Grove Plantation taken the 1st January 1767," TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1767/1. Simon Taylor to Benjamin Cowell, Kingston, March 24, 1768 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.55. Chaloner Arcedeckne originally intended to return to Jamaica and reside on Golden Grove, where Taylor had a great house specially constructed for him in his absence. However, Arcedeckne subsequently decided to remain in England where he lived out the remainder of his life in leisure. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, April 16, 1765 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.10. For the systems used by planters to calculate output and labor requirements, see, Higman, *Plantation Management,* p.225. The diaries of Nathaniel Phillips, who owned and

Taylor sought to increase production on Golden Grove by purchasing large numbers of Africans and seasoned slaves. Taylor initially purchased three large groups of slaves: in early 1765, Taylor bought twenty-four women; later in the same year, he bought thirty-two men; and two years later Arcedeckne's mother gifted twenty seasoned slaves to the estate (Table 5.1). Between 1769 and 1772, he bought fifty-eight other Africans from five different slave ships, in groups ranging in size from six to sixteen. By 1772, Taylor had thus purchased 134 enslaved people, all but twenty of whom came directly from Africa. Even so, Golden Grove's slave population barely grew in the same period: on January 1, 1772, there were 352 enslaved people on the plantation, sixteen *less* than on January 1, 1767. Taylor therefore suggested to Arcedeckne that he purchase a "larger gang" of slaves who had been "seasoned in Plantain Garden River" to address Golden Grove's manpower shortage in a single stroke. Arcedeckne approved and, in March 1774, Taylor purchased a gang of 120 people from John Kelly, the overseer of Golden Grove.[225]

After 1774, Taylor purchased Africans to maintain Golden Grove's slave population. Although Kelly's gang was a "prodigious acquisition" for Golden Grove, as Taylor described in March 1774, Taylor still encouraged Arcedeckne to buy "20 young Negroes annually" from Africa. By purchasing teenagers, rather than adults, Taylor hoped that the slave population would naturally increase, as the Africans would reach the conclusion of their seasoning just as they

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managed a similarly sized sugar estate adjacent to Golden Grove, indicates how Taylor might have performed these calculations. From 1776 until his departure for Britain in 1789, Phillips calculated whether he needed new workers based upon the prices of slaves, the prices of crops, and the credits he expected to receive at slave sales. He then noted to himself precisely how many captives he intended to buy, and their age and gender. Once he had made the decision, he asked his Kingston slave factor to, as he wrote in 1776, "let me know when any Negroes arrive that will answer my purpose" (Diary of Nathaniel Phillips, March 1776, in Jamaican Material in the Slebech Papers (JMSP), *BRRAM* (Wakefield: Microform Academic Publishers, 2004), 9405).

[225] For Taylor informing Arcedeckne of his intention to purchase slaves, see for example, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, December 9, 1775 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.154. For the gift of the twenty women, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, January 24, 1767 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.34. For the purchase of Kelly's gang, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, April 13, 1771 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.100; Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, December 8, 1773 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.126.

were able to bear children. Arcedeckne approved of the plan and, in November 1774, Taylor wrote that he would purchase Africans as soon as "a good Cargo" arrived. With the American Revolutionary War looming, however, and the price of sugar plunging, Taylor decided to "defer the Purchase," he wrote in March 1775, until 1780, and then, with the American War drawing to a close, he began annually purchasing slaves in 1782. Over the next two years, Taylor bought forty-five enslaved Africans from three different ships, hoping to quickly bring Golden Grove's gang up to strength. A series of devastating hurricanes between 1784 and 1786 caused the "entire destruction of the provisions by which the Negroes are supported," and so Taylor thought it the "height of madness" to purchase slaves. Once the grounds recovered, Taylor again began buying slaves and, between 1787 and 1792, he purchased between seven and thirteen captives every single year. From 1765, when Arcedeckne inherited Golden Grove, and 1792, when the detailed inventories of enslaved people on the plantation end, Taylor purchased at least 383 enslaved people: 243 Africans and 140 seasoned slaves.[226]

[226] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, March 12, 1774 in Wood ed., "Letters," pp.126-27. As Taylor later described to Arcedeckne, enslaved teenagers would also "come up as any [of the other slaves] grow old or fall off," stabilizing the slave population (Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, September 4, 1793, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1793/25). Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 19, 1774 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.135. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, March 27, 1775. In August 1781, a "large Guineaman" was in Kingston but Taylor decided not to purchase any slaves from her because of the "extreme scarcity of provisions" and the "precarious" state of Jamaica when Britain's "foes are so potent" (Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, August 28, 1781, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1781/21). For the destruction of the provision grounds and Taylor's decision to defer purchasing slaves, see, Doctor Benjamin Turney to John Turney, Golden Grove, October 4, 1785, Cambridge University Library. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, January 1, 1786, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1786/1.

Table 5.1: Enslaved people purchased for Golden Grove (number), 1765-1792

	Men	Women	Unknown	Total	Origin	Golden Grove Total Population
1765		24		24	African	
1765	32			32	African	
1767	3	10	7	20	Seasoned	367
1769	2		4	6	African	367
1770	2		4	6	African	
1771	3	1	12	16	African	
1771	11	4		15	African	
1772	10	5		15	African	352
1774	23	20	77	120	Seasoned	
1780	9		3	9	African	
1782	7	1	8	15	African	
1783	13			13	African	
1784	17			17	African	
1787	4		3	7	African	
1788	4	8	1	13	African	
1789	10			10	African	
1790		5		5	African	
1790	9	1		10	African	
1790	7			7	African	368
1791	8	4		12	African	379
1792	6	5		11	African	392
Total	**180**	**88**	**119**	**383**		

***Source**:* The names of enslaved Africans purchased by Taylor for Golden Grove's are in the inventories: January 1, 1767 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1767/1); January 1, 1768 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1768/1); January 1, 1773 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc /3A/1773/24); June 30, 1790 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc /3A/1790/41); January 1, 1791 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc /3A/1790/47); January, 1, 1792 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc /3A/1792/1); June 30, 1792 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1792/5). The population figures are from the same source. Given the gaps in the lists, I also analyzed Taylor's correspondence, within which he mentions the purchase of enslaved people to Arcedeckne (Wood ed., "Letters;" TVAP, *PLC,* Reels 2-3).

Examining Simon Taylor's slave purchasing pattern between 1765 and 1792 reveals several patterns (Table 5.1). First, Taylor relied on the trans-Atlantic slave trade to obtain the majority of enslaved workers for Golden Grove, but he also drew on an internal slave trade to

periodically obtain large gangs of seasoned slaves. Second, Taylor acquired adults or teenagers; none of the Africans that Taylor purchased were children. He thus selected Africans who he assumed were capable of working on Golden Grove immediately, not children who would be trained to particular tasks. Third, Taylor purchased Africans in groups, not as individuals, and so the Africans experienced their seasoning with their shipmates, not with strangers from an assortment of ships. Finally, Taylor carefully planned his purchases, and then bought groups of men or women to rectify demographic imbalances in the plantation's slave population.

Taylor employed a number of strategies to obtain healthy adult slaves of a particular age and gender. As Taylor told Arcedeckne after purchasing twenty-four men in 1765, he employed five different assistants to board the ship and "chuse… as many fine Men as they each could." Taylor then "call[ed] them together" and they chose "the best out of them."[227] Taylor also purchased groups of slaves from "different ships" so that he could pick out the healthiest slaves from each vessel. As a contemporary of Taylor's wrote, by purchasing slaves in lots from different ships "you may have a better choice," and would not be "induced to buy any Negroes that are not best in order." In the 1780s and 1790s, Taylor also cultivated familial connections with Kingston Guinea factors, and they allowed him to enter slave sales before other buyers to pick out slaves, or allowed him to pay premium prices for the "privilege" of accessing the

[227] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 11, 1765 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.28. Taylor never detailed how he attended slave sales, but Nathaniel Phillips' diaries are revealing. Phillips typically arrived in Kingston several days prior to the opening of a slave sale and stayed in one of his houses in town. On the opening day of the sale, Phillips then boarded the vessel and selected captives, who he kept in town for two or three days before leading them back to the plantation. Alternatively, Phillips sent the captives back to the plantation with trusted slaves; Phillips frequently arrived back at the plantation a day, and sometimes a week later after the newly purchased Africans (For Phillips' visits to Kingston slave sales, see for example, Diary of Nathaniel Phillips, March 24, 1778, November 4, 1778, & November 18, 1788 in JMSP, *BRRAM*, 9407; June 4-June 15, 1781 in Ibid., 9411; June 6-June 23, 1781 in Ibid., 9416).

healthiest slaves at the beginning of the sale.[228] Taylor, like other affluent planters, used his status to gain access to the highest-priced adult slaves.

Jamaican planters rarely used boats to transport Africans to their estates and instead force marched the Africans on roads. Africans destined for Saint Thomas in the East landed ashore at Kingston's wharves and then marched along the Windward Road, which led directly to the east end of the island (Figure 5.1). As Jamaican planter-historian William Beckford vividly described in 1790, the quays where the slaves landed were a "scene of bustle and confusion," as hogsheads of sugar were rowed out to merchantmen anchored in the harbor. Captives coming ashore had their nostrils immediately assaulted, another author wrote, with the "compounded stench" of rotting produce "frying" in the sun and were startled by the sight of enslaved people "busy at their labour with hardly rags to secret their nakedness." Africans were pushed away from the docks along wide thoroughfares thronged with people, livestock and carts. After reaching the central plaza the Africans trudged along Queen Street, one of Kingston's main streets, to the Windward Road, which was overshadowed by the looming Blue Mountains on the horizon. After leaving Kingston, the road passed along the beach and numerous springs, allowing dehydrated Africans to slake their thirst. The Windward Road then hugged the shore line as it led east. As a nineteenth-century traveler described, the "brilliant sea" stretched out to the right of the road, with ships—including slave ships—passing close to the shore as they made for Kingston; the "inaccessible mountains" reared up to the left.[229]

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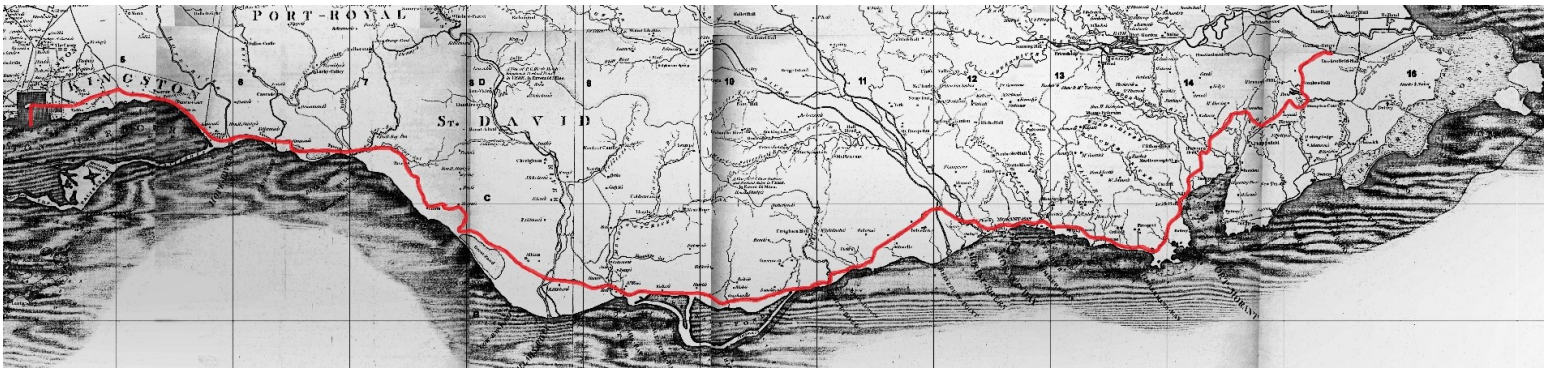
[228] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Lyssons, July 25, 1768 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.64. William Vassal to John Wedderburn, Boston, August 24, 1774 in *The Vassall Letter Books, 1769-1800* (Wakefield: Micro Methods Ltd, 1963). For Taylor's connections to Kingston factors and the strategies he employed to access the highest priced slaves, see, Nicholas Radburn, "Guinea Factors, Slave Sales, and the Profits of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Late Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: The Case of John Tailyour," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (April, 2015), pp.243–86.

[229] For the wharves and roads, see, William Beckford, *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica with Remarks upon the Cultivation of the Sugar-Cane ...* (London, 1790) I, pp.320-21; J. B. Moreton, *West India Customs and*

Figure 5.1: Route from Kingston to Golden Grove in the second half of the eighteenth century



Source: James Robertson, *Map of the County of Surrey* (London, 1804)

The fifty-mile march to Golden Grove along badly maintained roads was exhausting for emaciated slaves who had been, as Doctor Collins wrote, "crippled by a sedentary position" in a slave ship and "d[id] not immediately recover the power of their limbs." The roadways were typically clogged with "sand, deep mud, and clay," as Edward Long described, and became morasses during the wet-season between May and October. Few of the paths cut through the mountains, and they climbed directly up steep hills and then plunged down the other side. The roads were also filled, as Beckford described, with "continually clattering" sugar wains—wheeled vehicles, the like of which Africans would never have seen—driven by slaves, that "bur[ied] travelers "in successive columns of dust," and "continually salut[ed]" their ears "with noise and uproar." "[S]trings of negroes… pass[ed] and repass[ed] upon a variety of avocations" and "groups of white people… assemble[d] together." As they walked through the plantations that lined the Windward Road they would also have seen "long sweep[s]" of slaves cutting canes, followed by a white overseer and black driver, giving them some sense of their fate. Once Africans left the large trunk roads that connected the major ports and towns, the going became

Manners: Containing Strictures on the Soil, Cultivation, Produce, Trade, Officers, and Inhabitants: With the Method of Establishing, and Conducting a Sugar Plantation. To Which Is Added, the Practice of Training New Slaves (London, 1793), p.16. For the layout of Kingston, see, Michael Hay, [Plan of Kingston, Jamaica], (Kingston, 1745). Hay noted on his map that Queen Street, along which Africans marched on their way to Saint Thomas in the East, was sixty six feet wide. For the Windward Road, see, James Hakewill, *A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1825).

even more difficult because planters cut a crude muddy path to their estate. Escape was nearly impossible as slaves traipsed to the plantation. Psychological trauma, physical weakness, the assault on the senses brought on by an alien environment, and the desire to stay with shipmates no doubt all presented almost insurmountable barriers to elopement.[230]

Once the Africans arrived at Golden Grove, Taylor subjected them to a process that was designed to erase their former identity and integrate them into the plantation work force. "The first night" that the slaves arrived, Taylor told Parliament during a 1792 enquiry into the abolition of the slave trade, he sent the Africans "into the kitchen" of the plantation house, "or into the hospital," both of which were relatively "dry warm places." The overseer fed the captives "under his own eye," presumably to ensure that none of the Africans refused food, and then provided them a new set of clothes. Men received a frock coat, trousers, and a cap, and women, a skirt, petticoat, and hat, all made from oznaburg, a coarse, scratchy and drab fabric similar to sackcloth. Although uncomfortable, clothing would perhaps have been a welcome respite from months of nakedness and a shield against cold and damps.[231]

Planters re-named the slaves. On Golden Grove, Taylor and his overseer used the Jamaican planters' well-thumbed mental dictionary of names, which included classical names,

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[230] Collins, *Practical Rules,* p.62. For the poor condition of Jamaica's roads, see, Long, *History…* I, p.469, 475. For traffic and plantations on the roads, see, Beckford, *Descriptive Account*. I, pp.320-321; II, p.48. For a description of a coffle of newly imported slaves marching to a plantation, see, Philip Wright, ed., *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2000), p.281. At least two enslaved people did escape on the road from a slave sale, but these case seems to have been exceptional. A man eloped while he was being "conduct[ed] from Kingston where he had been purchased about ten days before out of the *Ann*" (*The Jamaica Mercury,* Kingston, May 6, 1780). Another man was "lost" on the road a day after his owner purchased him from a slave sale in Montego Bay. The man had new clothing, and "a bit of card" around his neck held with "a piece of tape," clearly the label that colonists used to claim slaves at sales (*Cornwall Chronicle,* Montego Bay, July 18, 1793).

[231] Testimony of Simon Taylor in *Minutes of the Evidence Taken at the Bar of the House of Lords…* (London, 1792), p.125. Doctor Collins suggested that "Upon their arrival at the estate," Africans should be "supplied with caps, jackets, blankets, petticoats or trowaser… But if proper dresses be not ready, they should be furnished with a warm blanket at any rate, until they can be procured" (Collins, *Practical Rules.* p.62). Planters either purchased clothing in town, or made new captives wear the blanket while a plantation slave fabricated "New Negro clothes." (See, for example, Diary of Thomas Thistlewood (DTT), January 16, 1755, MONSON31/6, BRBML).

African day names, and diminutive forms of European names. On two occasions, Taylor did rename entire groups of Africans by using similar monikers. Thus, in 1780, seven of ten men purchased for Golden Grove were given the names Townsend, Clinton, Burgoyne, Rodney, Chatham, and Fox, all statesmen or military leaders involved in some way with the American Revolutionary War. Four men purchased nine years later were renamed after places with a connection to Taylor's past: Holland (where he trained as a merchant), Scotland, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, places in his family's native land. Most remarkably of all, he called three Gold Coast men purchased from his cousin John Tailyour in 1790, as Simon, John, and Taylor. Planters like Taylor displayed their mastery over captive Africans by attempting to imprint their own histories upon them.[232]

Taylor completed his symbolic erasure of the Africans' identities by branding the slaves. "This operation," Jamaican planter Bryan Edwards wrote in 1793, "is performed by heating a small silver brand, composed of one or two letters, in the flame of spirits of wine, and applying it to the skin, which is previously anointed with sweet oil." Edwards, who of course had never been branded himself, assured his readers that "the application is instantaneous, and the pain momentary," but the procedure must have been terrifying for the Africans. Edwards recalled an Igbo-speaking boy who "screamed dreadfully," during his branding, while his "companions of the same nation manifested strong emotions of sympathetic terror." The brand marks themselves are described in detail in the runaway advertisements posted in colonial newspapers and differed

[232] The names of Golden Grove's slaves are in the plantation inventories. See Table 5.1. Robert Carter of Virginia named slaves purchased for his tobacco estate in 1727, and then sent them to be worked by his overseer who, he advised, should "take care" that they "always go by the names we gave them" which he had "repeated [to] them so often… that every one knew their names & would readily answer to them" (Robert Carter to Robert Jones, Corotom, Virginia, October 10, 1727, Carter Letterbook 1727-1728, University of Virginia Library). Even so, Africans retained their names amongst the other slaves: as an Antiguan attorney informed a plantation manager in 1764, slaves possessed two names "the white people calling them by one name & the negroes by another" (Francis Farley to Clement Tudway, Parham, May 20, 1764, Tudway of Wells Antiguan estate papers, 1689-1907, *British Records Relating to America in Microform* (Wakefield: Microfilm Academic Publishers, 1999)).

depending on the name and location of the planter, who had brands made to order by blacksmiths. Jamaican colonists usually branded slaves on either the shoulder or chest with the initials of their own names, or those of the plantation, sometimes with devices such as diamonds in between the letters, or the letters interlaced together; the Golden Grove slaves were likely branded with two Gs interlaced, or Chaloner Arcedeckne's initials.[233]

Renamed, scorched with the mark of their owners, and dressed in the drab uniform of the plantation slave, the Africans were next forced to house themselves and integrate into a slave community that was supposed to be self-sufficient. As Beckford explained, there were "two methods generally adopted" to assign Africans houses and grounds, both of which Taylor employed on Golden Grove. Under the first system, the Africans arrived at the plantation and were "quartered upon old [slaves], under whom they are to learn to make a [provision] ground." Taylor told the House of Lords that the slaves took the Africans into their grounds on Sundays and holidays to "shew them the way of working the grounds." The Africans were expected to apply these lessons one or two days per week, when they built "houses for themselves" and made "grounds for themselves," as Taylor explained to Arcedeckne in 1770. Captives had to carve out new grounds, Taylor told the Lords, from "ruinate grounds, which is land that has been in provisions before, and which has run into bushes." Working in a gang together, the Africans hacked back bushes and vines, and then "hole[d] it for corn," which, once grown, they ran "through either with cocoa [a root vegetable] or yams, and a plantain walk [a line of banana trees]." Once in "full bearing" the land was divided into individual provision grounds for each African. To construct houses, Golden Grove's overseer supplied timber to the Africans, who

[233] Edwards painted this gruesome picture to contrast the supposed cowardice of the Igbo with the courage of the Coromantee slaves who, he said, barged their way forward and thrust their chest out to receive the brand (Edwards, *History, Civil,* II, p.65). See also, Testimony of Lewis Cuthbert, *Minutes of the Evidence…*, p.97. For the variety of brands used in Jamaica, see, Douglas B. Chambers ed., *Runaway Slaves in Jamaica (I): Eighteenth Century,* (2013).

built their houses with the assistance of "carpenters and other Negroes." Africans may have lived with their shipmates or new partners as there was, according to Taylor, "commonly one house to two Negroes."[234]

Taylor's idealized description ignores the abuse that Africans suffered as they struggled to establish houses and grounds after the trauma of their enslavement. Plantation slaves, who were themselves victims of exploitation by whites, were apt to make the Africans work in their grounds for free, or for their subsistence. As William Sutherland, overseer of the Perrin family's Blue Mountain Jamaican plantation, described in 1787, there were two sorts of captives upon a sugar plantation: the "better sort of negroes," who possessed provision grounds and property, and the "poor Negroes," property-less workers, including newly arrived Africans. The "better sort," Sutherland wrote, "get as many of the poor worthless Negroes" to work in their grounds as they could, in return for "as much Provisions as they can eat." The "better sort" were thus eager to obtain workers for their grounds: William Young, who possessed plantations in Saint Vincent, described in 1791 how the slaves almost "tore to pieces" his overseer in their "earnestness" to "have an inmate" from among some of the slaves that he had just bought from a slave ship.[235]

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[234] For the provision ground system, see, Higman, *Slave Populations*, pp.188-217; Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan eds., *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Routledge, 2016). For the quartering of Africans with existing plantation slaves, see Beckford, *Remarks*, p.27; Testimony of Simon Taylor in *Minutes of the Evidence…,* p.125. See also, Gordon Turnbull, *An apology for negro slavery…* (London, 1786), pp.24-5. Thomas Barritt to Nathanial Philips, Pleasant Hill, Jamaica, July 4, 1793, JMSP, *BRRAM,* 8419. Testimony of Henry Coor in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.93. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, February 25, 1770 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.87.

[235] William Sutherland to Messrs Jaques & Laing, Blue Mountain, Jamaica, April 9, 1787, Fitzherbert Family Papers (FFP), Derbyshire Record Office (DRO), D239/M/E/17803. Sir William Young, *A Tour Through the Several Islands of Barbadoes, St. Vincent, Antigua, Tobago, and Grenada, In the Years 1791 & 1792* (London, 1801), p.267. For an analysis of plantation slaves' stratified social structure, see Justin Roberts, "The 'Better Sort' and the 'Poorer Sort': Wealth Inequalities, Family Formation and the Economy of Energy on British Caribbean Sugar Plantations, 1750–1800," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 3 (July 3, 2014), pp.458–73. For planters disproving of assigning Africans to the grounds of existing slaves, see, also, Gabriel Debien, *Plantations et esclaves à Saint-Domingue: sucrerie Foäche* (Dakar, 1962), p.46; P. J. Laborie, *The Coffee Planter of Saint Domingo…* (London, 1798), p.163; Long, *History,* II, pp.435; Testimony of Henry Coor in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.93.

Taylor placed Africans together with existing slaves until June 1782, when he informed Arcedeckne that from then on in he would put Africans "by themselves" to prevent them being "destroyed by the Old Negroes making them their slaves."[236] Taylor had provision grounds prepared in anticipation of the African's arrival and houses constructed; as he explained to Arcedeckne in June 1787, "there is no putting on Negroes until we get Provisions for them."[237] This second method of assigning houses and grounds also had dire effects on the Africans. Beckford disproved of putting captives into their own grounds because they had to work under the eye of a driver, presumably because they were too depressed, despondent or rebellious to work unsupervised. Africans who had no knowledge of agriculture, such as soldiers taken as prisoners of war, traders sold into slavery for their debts, or adolescents, must have particularly struggled to maintain an allotment that was expected to feed them for life. Moreover, hungry captives found it difficult to attain the self-sufficiency demanded by their master, as they immediately devoured any crops in their grounds, "destroy[ing] in one day," as Beckford wrote, "what was expected… to last a year." Sat alone in their huts, despondent Africans often pined away and let their house fall apart, something that Taylor implausibly put down to them not wanting to live in "parish housing." Africans also suffered the resentment of the plantation's

[236] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, June 11, 1782, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1782/28.
[237] For the construction of houses and grounds before the arrival of Africans, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, June 3, 1787, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1787/8. See also, Mr. Richard Beckford's Instruction to Messrs. John Cope, Richard Lewing and Robert Mason, Westmoreland [Jamaica], April 10, 1754, Thomas Thistlewood Papers, MONSON31/86; Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, September 2, 1765, Kingston, *PLC,* Vanneck-Arc /3A/1765/12; Malcolm Laing to William Philip Perrin, Kingston, November 20, 1763, FFP, DRO, D239/M/E/16642. For the hiring of slaves to plant grounds, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, May 5, 1771, TVAP, *PLC,* Vanneck-Arc /3A/1771/3; Gabriel Debien, *Une plantation de Saint-Domingue.: La sucrerie Galbaud du Fort (1690-1802)* (Cairo, 1976), p.103. For the difficulties faced by Africans in raising grounds, see also, Testimony of William Fitzmaurice in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 83, p.229. For Africans' despondency, see also, Debien, *sucrerie Foäche*, p.45.

existing slaves, because establishing new houses and grounds frequently meant additional work for them, or the disruption of their own houses and grounds.[238]

To integrate enslaved Africans into the workforce, planters always sought, as Beckford summarized, to develop "an idea of independency" in the Africans "that they may look forward to their own house, their own ground, and in time, their own family." The planters did not, however, act out of benevolence towards their bondsmen. Rather, they wanted to ensure that hungry Africans would not eat their profits. Cynical planters also knew that enslaved people who planted "a little corner of Africa" in their grounds in the Americas, as historian Gabriel Debien has described, might forget the actual corner of Africa from which they had been taken. Planters like Taylor knew, therefore, that by forcing their bondsmen to achieve an "independency" through various cynical strategies, the Africans would become open to exploitation.[239]

When Africans were not building houses and digging their provision grounds, they were forced to work on the plantation. The intensity of the labor that the Africans were put to on Golden Grove depended in large measure on the time when they were purchased. The first groups of captives brought to Golden Grove by Andrew Arcedeckne between 1735 and 1745 were almost certainly forced to settle the empty tract of land and construct the sugar plantation immediately after their arrival, given how rapidly the estate's output increased. By the late 1750s, Golden Grove had two water mills and a cattle mill, all of which must have been built soon after the settlement of the estate by African slaves, who would have made bricks and

[238] Beckford, *Remarks,* p.29. Testimony of Simon Taylor, *Minutes,* p.125. Taylor told a prospective slave buyer that some Africans were "merchants and traders and who have been sold for being bankrupts or for crimes" and others were "warriors taken in battle." Jamaican planters were not "fond of buying" soldiers, he said, because they were "considered dangerous." (Simon Taylor to David Reid, Kingston, March 10, 1801, The Taylor Family Papers from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London (STFP), *PLC,* Reel 8).
[239] Beckford, *Remarks,* p.29. See also, Testimony of Archibald Campbell in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, pp.144-45. Gabriel Debien, *Plantations et esclaves à Saint-Domingue: sucrerie Cottineau* (Dakar, 1962), p.36.

mortar, hauled them to the construction site, and helped to erect the buildings. To power the water mill, the slaves also had to dig a canal and erect a dam, heavy work in Golden Grove's alluvial soil. Andrew Arcedeckne simultaneously expected the Africans to plant and harvest cane, ensuring a return on his investment. The Africans had little time to recuperate from their sea voyage under Andrew Arcedeckne's management, and they must have been mercilessly worked to get Golden Grove operational. As an experienced Jamaican planter explained in 1783, "settlers" of new plantations put slaves to "hard labour as soon as they are bought."[240]

When Taylor took over the management of Golden Grove he insisted to Arcedeckne that newly purchased Africans would be slowly inured to hard labor. Using the metaphor of a small pin that bore the weight of the sugar mill's heavy rollers, Taylor pointed out in 1770 that enslaved Africans were not "Steel or Iron."[241] Africans needed to be "easily worked until they are seasoned," Taylor told Arcedeckne in 1781, because "to work them immediately hard only breaks their Hearts."[242] Captives should only work "three days" a week, he wrote a year later, and spend the other four days "making their own Grounds and preparing houses for themselves." "In this way," Taylor continued, they would "season kindly."[243] Taylor therefore ordered the overseer to assign the Africans to perform ancillary tasks during their seasoning to "prevent drawing any of the Seasoned hands off" from more laborious tasks, as he told Arcedeckne in 1765. In crop time, Africans "cleaned the canes," a relatively simple operation whereby the slave took the cut cane, and lopped off the long grass like tops with a knife, before bundling them up

[240] For the works at Golden Grove, see, Higman, *Plantation Management,* pp.184-91. When Taylor had the works re-built on Golden Grove in 1765 he had "twenty of the best hands constantly carrying lime and sand and filling the wains [carts] with Stones etc." (Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 11, 1765 in Wood ed., "Letters," p287). William Sutherland to Jaques & Laing, Blue Mountain, Jamaica, November 24, 1783, FFP, DRO, D239/M/E/17766. The frontier of slavery was expanded, as one Saint Domingue planter macabrely pointed out in 1773, "by making the earth a grave." (*en faisant de la terre le fosse)* (Quoted in Debien, *sucrerie Cottineau,* p.47).
[241] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, February 25, 1770 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.87.
[242] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 26, 1781, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1781/27.
[243] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, June 11, 1782, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1782/28

for transportation to the mill.[244] Africans also worked in the still house and "rammed the cisterns," whereby they struck the hoops that held together wooden fermentation tanks whenever they shook loose.[245] Outside of the harvest, they were forced to dig fields and plant them with yams; weed fields; pick up rocks; and plant and cut grass to feed livestock.[246] Seasoned slaves performed the back-breaking work of digging holes, and Africans and children followed closely behind them, placing canes into the holes, and covering them back over with dirt; once shoots started to poke through the ground, Africans weeded. Taylor also employed newly imported Africans on construction projects: in December 1789, Taylor purchased ten men from a slave ship who would be employed "making Bricks" and "pick[ing] up stones to burn lime," that would then be shaped into gutters by skilled slaves.[247]

Golden Grove's slaves, like others on sugar plantations, were organized into gangs which were stratified according to the strength and age of the members, through which the overseer progressively moved the Africans. Upon their arrival on the plantation, Taylor had the Africans initially assigned to the second gang or the "grass gang" which comprised the sickly and the children; alternatively they were formed into their own gang, overseen by a driver or a cook.[248] According to Taylor's schema, the Africans would move into the field gang after "12 or 18 months," as he told Arcedeckne in 1789.[249] Yet, Africans brought to Golden Grove appear to

[244] For Africans cleaning canes, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 6, 1787, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1787/18; Thomas Samson to Henry Goulburn, Amity Hall, Jamaica, March 15, 1805 in Papers Relating to the Jamaica Estates of the Goulburn Family of Betchworth House, *BRRAM* (Wakefield: Microform Academic Publishers, 2008).
[245] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 11, 1765 in Wood ed., "Letters," p287
[246] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, June 11, 1782, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1782/28.
[247] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, December 24, 1789, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1789/29.
[248] The York Estate in Jamaica had, for example, a forty-one year old woman named Charlotte who was employed as the "Cook for New Negroes" ("A List of Negroes on York Estate the 1st of January 1778," Negro and stock accounts, 1778-1837, The Gale-Morant Papers, 1731-1925, *BRRAM* (Wakefield: Microform Academic Publishers, 1977), Section 3/c)..
[249] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, July 5, 1789, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1789/19.

have been pushed into the field gang within months of their arrival at the plantation, if not immediately, to achieve the production targets set by Arcedeckne. According to Taylor, John Kelly, the overseer of the plantation, had the Africans brought to the plantation between 1765 and 1781 "worked to death" by forcing them to produce large crops.[250] Production on Golden Grove did indeed soar under Kelly's management: in 1765, the plantation produced just over 300 hogsheads of sugar a year; in 1770, output rose to 630 hogsheads, "more than any Estate ever yet made in this Island," as Taylor gleefully reported to Arcedeckne; in 1775, this record was smashed when Taylor shipped 740 hogsheads.[251] Between 1767 and 1773 (two years when inventories of enslaved people are extant), the number of slaves bought after 1765 increased from fifty-six to ninety, while the population of slaves who had been living on the plantation before 1765 fell from 312 to 220. Only by forcing African slaves into the field could Kelly have doubled production in the course of five years while the existing slave population fell so substantially.[252]

The occupation lists for Golden Grove's slaves confirm that Africans were overwhelmingly assigned to the field during their seasoning. Of the 212 Africans named in the inventories who Taylor purchased between 1765 and 1792, none had a skilled profession listed as their initial occupation. Rather, they were listed as "New Negroes" or "Field" slaves. Neither did Africans typically move from the field gang into professions. One hundred and fifty-four African men are named in the lists, and just two of them eventually moved into a profession: Gloster who was employed as a carpenter, and Glasgow, who was trained as a rope maker.

[250] Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, November 26, 1781, TVAP, *PLC*, reel 2, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1781/27.
[251] For output on Golden Grove, see, Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, September 14, 1770 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.95. Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, July 24, 1775 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.150; Higman, *Plantation Management,* pp.184-91.
[252] January 1, 1767 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1767/1); January 1, 1773 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc /3A/1773/24)

Fourteen of the men were eventually employed as watchmen, but this was a position reserved for aged or infirm men who could no longer perform field work, not skilled labor. The occupational structure of the African women was similar. Of the fifty-eight named African women, three became field cooks, one a nurse, and remainder worked in the field, sometimes for remarkably long periods. Of twenty-four Gold Coast women purchased in April 1765, for example, six of the nine surviving women were still working in the field gang twenty-five years later, by which point they must have been middle-aged. Taylor bought Africans to perform hard labor in Golden Grove's fields, not to perform particular skills or professions.[253]

African slaves toiled in the field at Golden Grove because seasoned and creole hands occupied skilled positions. On January 1, 1767, there were 312 people on Golden Grove (122 men, 127 women, 32 boys, and 31 girls), who were owned by Andrew Arcedeckne, that is slaves purchased by Andrew Arcedeckne and their descendants (Table 5.2). Of ninety-four men capable of work, all but sixteen were employed outside of the field: as drivers, blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, sawyers, doctors, cart drivers, mule men, cattle men, sugar boilers, distillers, watchmen, grooms, cooks, fishermen, gardeners, shepherds, and rope makers. Eighty-eight of the 127 women could work, and of these women, seventy-one toiled in the field, with the remainder employed as gardeners, cooks, washerwomen, housekeepers, and fowl-keepers. On January 1, 1767, then, Golden Grove's field gang comprised thirty-two African men, twenty-four African women, seventy-one seasoned women, and just sixteen seasoned men. While their numbers dwindled over time, Andrew Arcedeckne's slaves managed to keep their grip on the non-field positions on Golden Grove, excluding the swelling numbers of Africans and their children. On June 30, 1792, 182 of Andrew Arcedeckne's slaves lived on Golden Grove, alongside 210 of

[253] I have analyzed the occupational structure of Golden Grove's slaves by entering the numerous inventories listed in table 5.1 into a database and then cross-referencing the named people.

Chaloner Arcedeckne's slaves. Eighty-four of Chaloner Arcedeckne's male slaves could still work, of whom nine occupied non-field positions; just six of the sixty-three women from the same cohort worked in non-field occupations. All but eight of the fifty-six men, and twenty-one of the fifty-six women who belonged to Andrew Arcedeckne worked in non-field positions, by contrast. Africans, and especially African women, spent their lives in Golden Grove's field gang because seasoned slaves occupied non-field positions.[254]

[254] As Taylor told Arcedeckne that "there are many things which Women cannot do, as Cutting Copperwood, Wainmen, Boilers, Distillers, Stokers, Mulemen, etc." (Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, Kingston, July 23, 1770 in Wood ed., "Letters," p.93). For the gendered division of labor on sugar plantations, see also, Higman et al., *Montpelier, Jamaica*, p42; Craton, *Searching,* p.180; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

Table 5.2: Occupations of Golden Grove's slaves, 1767 & 1792

	January 1, 1767				June 30, 1792			
	Slaves Purchased before 1/1/1765 (Andrew Arcedeckne's)		Slaves Purchased after 1/1/1765 (Chaloner Arcedeckne's)		Slaves Purchased before 1/1/1765 (Andrew Arcedeckne's)		Slaves Purchased after 1/1/1765 (Chaloner Arcedeckne's)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Field	16	71	32	24	8	35	75	57
	10%	28%	100%	100%	9%	36%	60%	68%
Non-Field	78	17	0	0	48	21	9	6
	51%	36%	0%	0%	56%	22%	7%	7%
Sub-Total	*94*	*88*	*32*	*24*	*56*	*56*	*84*	*63*
Children	32	31	0	0	13	24	15	14
	21%	20%	0%	0%	15%	25%	12%	16%
Invalids & Superannuated	28	39	0	0	17	16	26	8
	18%	16%	0%	0%	20%	17%	21%	9%
Total	**154**	**158**	**32**	**24**	**86**	**96**	**125**	**85**
	312		**56**		**182**		**210**	

Source: January 1, 1767 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 1, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1767/1; June 30, 1792 (TVAP, *PLC*, reel 3, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1792/5). All of Golden Grove's slave inventories were split in two, with Andrew Arcedeckne's slaves inventoried separately from those of Chaloner Arcedeckne.

The Africans brought to Golden Grove were not, as Taylor called it, "easily worked until they are seasoned" because the owners of the plantations constantly demanded that the slaves produce massive quantities of sugar. The captives brought to Golden Grove immediately after its foundation in the 1730s and 1740s were forced to establish the plantation by digging fields and building works to quickly yield a profit to Andrew Arcedeckne. Those Africans who survived this brutal period eventually filled the numerous skilled positions on the plantation, creating a

stark social hierarchy. Africans who arrived on the plantation after 1765 had to fit into this hierarchy, both by working in the grounds of other slaves, and by entering the stratified workforce. Taylor's overseer forced Africans straight into the field gang in order to meet the high production levels demanded by Chaloner Arcedeckne. Africans therefore had few opportunities to escape from the field gang at the conclusion of their short seasoning, and they spent their entire lives working in the field. Even on the largest plantations in the British Americas, then, enslaved Africans were not given time to recuperate from the trauma of the Long Middle Passage.

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Turning to the seasoning of Africans by overseer Thomas Thistlewood shows how individual enslaved Africans experienced their acclimatization in Jamaica. Thistlewood was born into a farming family in Lincolnshire, England, in 1721 and, aged twenty-nine, he immigrated to Jamaica. His detailed diaries provide an unparalleled vantage point from which to study the day-to-day realties of plantation life in Jamaica, including the seasoning of enslaved Africans by whites. In July 1750, three months after his arrival in Jamaica, Thistlewood was appointed overseer of the Vineyard Pen in Westmoreland, a parish on the western end of the island. At 1,172 acres, Vineyard Pen was a medium sized livestock pen and, like most other pens, it was operated as a "satellite pen" for nearby sugar works—that is, cattle and mules from the estate were led to the adjacent plantations to fertilize fields, drive the mills and haul carts. While geographically large, pens had far fewer enslaved workers than an equivalent sized sugar plantation, typically around fifty, and rarely more than a hundred. Soon after Thistlewood's arrival at Vineyard Pen on July 15, 1750, he carefully recorded the names of the forty-two slaves then on the pen, thirteen of whom he designated as recently purchased Africans with an asterisk,

five boys and eight women. The five boys probably came from the same slave ship, but the eight women must have arrived in Jamaica on at least two different vessels because three of them were from the Gold Coast, and at least three had been enslaved in West Central Africa. The Africans likely arrived at Vineyard shortly before Thistlewood because he consistently identified them as "New Negroes" and noted their African, as well as Jamaican, names.[255]

Like the Africans brought to Golden Grove, Vineyard's Africans struggled to achieve self-sufficiency through the provision ground system during their seasoning. The Africans appear to have already been assigned to houses prior to Thistlewood's arrival but they must not have had grounds, as they spent one day a week digging new grounds. Until their grounds bore crops, Thistlewood fed the captives himself every day at noon by forming them into what planters called a "pot gang." In this way, Thistlewood sought to make the Africans beholden to himself and not the other slaves. The seasoned plantation slaves rarely ate from this supply, except those who were too ill or young to work, or the children. Planters therefore shamed Africans into growing their own provisions by putting them on a level with invalids and children. Stingy planters also refused to provide sufficient supplies to the pot gang, starving them so that they would grow food in their grounds. Thistlewood ordinarily issued each slave a herring a day, a pint of flour a week, and a few ears of corn to those who he thought were particularly hungry. The Africans on Vineyard were perpetually hungry as a result; in early August 1750,

[255] For Livestock pens, see, Verene Shepherd, *Livestock, Sugar and Slavery: Contested Terrain in Colonial Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2009), pp.14-47. For Vineyard Pen, see, Morgan, "Slaves and Livestock," pp.47–76. For Thomas Thistlewood, see, Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-86* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1999); Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004). DTT, July 15, 1750, MONSON30/1. Thus, Betty was also Aramak, Mary was Odomah, Quashe was Obraffommy, and Sussex was Balla. When recording interactions with the Africans, Thistlewood sometimes interchanged the European and African names, implying that they were used freely on the plantation and without his censure. However, of the twenty-nine slaves who had worked on Vineyard for any period of time, Thistlewood only noted four African aliases, implying that these names may have progressively fallen out of usage, at least in his presence (DTT, July 15, 1750, MONSON30/1).

Thistlewood wrote in his diary that the Africans "complain very much of hunger… and not without reason."[256]

The example of George, alias Aqua, one of the African boys on Vineyard, demonstrates how Africans desperately tried to fill their empty stomachs. In early October, George "ran away with Tony and Waniker's breakfast," presumably because he was starving, and "has not been seen since."[257] That night, George broke into the hut of a watchman and stole some cassava, but two days later, he was brought back to the pen and locked up. George eloped the same night, having apparently been broken out by two of his ship mates, but was soon recaptured; Thistlewood gave him and his accomplices one hundred lashes each.[258] Two weeks later, George ran away "in ye forenoon when Every body was at work," and by midday he was hiding in the provision grounds, probably to find food, where another slave encountered him. George pulled out a knife and "threaten'd to do her Mischief if she came nigh him," and later slipped back onto the plantation to take food and wine from another slave's house, before being once again taken.[259] George fled the pen twice again in November, taking, on the second occasion, "2 of ye Negroe's breakfast with him," but on both occasions was brought back within a day.[260] This proved to be his last act on Vineyard pen: on 30 November, 1750 Thistlewood sent George down

[256] For the "pot gang" system, see, Testimony of Gilbert Francklyn in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 71, p.90. Planters also obtained provisions for the Africans by buying them from the existing slaves, or by growing them on provision grounds "for the general use of the plantation." (Testimony of Lewis Cuthbert, *Minutes,* p.64). A Jamaican planter urged his estate's owner that the best way to prevent the old slaves employing Africans on their provision grounds was to ensure that the plantation had a large supply of barreled provisions, which he could use to feed the Africans while they dug their own grounds (William Sutherland to Messrs Jaques & Laing, Blue Mountain, Jamaica, April 9, 1787, FFP, DRO, D239/M/E/17803). For the daily rations issued to African slaves, see the daily entries throughout Thistlewood's diary during 1750/1 (MONSON31/1 & 2). These skimpy rations were common in the West Indies: William Douglass wrote in 1749 that Africans were allowed "one Pint of Guinea Corn, one salt Herring, or an Equivalent per Day" (*A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting, Progressive Improvements, and Present State of the British Settlements in North-America…* (Boston, 1749) I, p.119). DTT, August 7, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[257] DTT, October 8, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[258] DTT, October 9-12, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[259] DTT, October 24, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[260] DTT, November 7, November 22, 1750, MONSON31/1.

to the local town, presumably to be sold away.[261] From his purchase until his banishment, George spent just four months on Vineyard pen, during which time he fled the estate on five occasions, seemingly to forage for food to satiate his hunger.

Thistlewood did not gradually increase the Africans' labor, as he forced them into the field alongside the other slaves throughout his time on Vineyard. The labor on a pen was also divided according to gender and age. Adult men held the specialized positions of pen-keeper, and they handled the large animals and herded them down to the neighboring sugar plantations and ports, giving them ample opportunities to travel away from the pen. Other males rounded up the cattle on the pen itself, moved them between pastures, and tended to individual animals. Thistlewood assigned the Africans to the field gang, regardless of their age and gender, where they performed diverse tasks alongside the seasoned women. They cleared the pastures of stones, planted grass for the animals, mended the fences, repaired ditches and drains, scythed fodder, and farmed corn—the staple food for both humans and animals on the pen. While the work in Vineyard's field gang was not as laborious as that on a sugar plantation like Golden Grove, it was by no means easy: the Africans still had to rise at dawn and work until sunset, while hungry, weak, and traumatized by their enslavement.[262]

Because the population of slaves on the pen was small, the Africans also had much closer daily contact with whites than the hundreds of Africans who toiled on Golden Grove. As Philip D. Morgan has described in his detailed study of Vineyard Pen, the Africans educated Thistlewood about their previous lives; they also suffered brutal punishments at his hands, including frequent whippings for stealing food and livestock. Thistlewood also used his intimate contact with the slaves to have coerced sexual relations, especially with the Africans: throughout

[261] DTT, November 30, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[262] For the labor regime on Vineyard, see, Morgan, "Slaves and Livestock," p.54

his thirteen-month spell on Vineyard, Thistlewood had sex with every one of the recently arrived African women, sometimes on numerous occasions.[263]

The case of Marina, alias Worree, reveals the sexual violence that enslaved women were subjected to during their seasoning at the hands of whites. Thistlewood first took note of Marina on July 31, 1750, when he issued her with "half a dozen ears of corn," over and above the usual ration of a herring, believing her to be "in want."[264] Marina must have been particularly hungry, thin and weak from the ordeal of her enslavement, a circumstance that Thistlewood used to his advantage when, on August 10, he slept with her for the first time, and then again on almost every single day in August.[265] By September, Thistlewood's sexual relationship with Marina was such that he ceased to note specific interactions, and instead wrote that he slept with her "all ye month."[266] Marina soon began to receive numerous gifts from Thistlewood: initially his old discarded clothes, then cloth to make her a coat, and, eventually, an entire wardrobe of clothing; a wooden bowl, a hen, two penknives, and jewelry.[267] Thistlewood also paid a slave to hoe-plough Marina's provision ground and paid another to erect a two roomed "thatch'd and wattled" cabin for her.[268] Thistlewood later had one of his old book shelves installed that Marina could use as a bed, "fitted… up with matts."[269] Thistlewood allowed Marina to have a "house warming," for which he contributed "some sugars, 4 bottles of rum, some beef and pepper pot, with ten pints [of corn meal]." These were served to the visiting slaves, "and especially [her] ship mates," of which there were at least seven on Vineyard, who were "very merry all night," and

[263] Ibid., pp.59-60.
[264] DTT, July 31, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[265] DTT, August 10, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[266] DTT, September 1, 1750, MONSON31/1.
[267] DTT, August 17, September 16, 23, December 1, 25, 27, 1750, MONSON31/1. DTT, January 14, February 24, March 12, April 25, 27, May 1- 5, 1751, MONSON31/2.
[268] DTT, March 11, May 12, 27, 1751, MONSON31/2.
[269] DTT, June 23, 1751, MONSON31/2.

Marina got "very drunk."[270] Two days later, Thistlewood left the estate for a new job as overseer on Egypt plantation, but not before "speaking to Julius," a pennkeeper on Vineyard, "abt Marina," and then gave her various clothes, consumables, and furniture.[271] From the end of September 1750 until Thistlewood's departure from Vineyard in early July 1751, his sexual relationship with Marina appears to have become almost non-existent, as he turned his lustful gaze to other female slaves on the plantation, and particularly Marina's ship-mates.

Thistlewood left Vineyard and began his new employment on the Egypt sugar plantation on August 16, 1751. Egypt was spread over 1,500 acres of hills and swamps on the Cabarita River, which emptied into the sea to the west of Savanna La Mar, Westmoreland's primary port. Shortly after Thistlewood arrived at Egypt, he carefully listed the names of the eighty-nine slaves who inhabited the plantation, thirty-one men, twenty-nine women, and twenty-nine children. Egypt was a small sugar plantation, especially compared to estates like Golden Grove where almost four hundred Africans toiled. Focusing on twenty-five Africans who arrived at Egypt in 1754/55, when Thistlewood diary entries are particularly descriptive, shows how overseers on sugar plantations seasoned enslaved people, and their fierce resistance to the process. The twenty-five Africans came to Egypt in 1754/5 in four different groups (Table 5.3): on May 25, 1754, a single man was brought to the estate; four men and five women arrived on June 13, 1754; four men and two boys on September 11, 1754; and seven men and three women on June 4, 1755. John Cope, the owner of Egypt, therefore purchased groups of African men and women, and almost no children. Like Taylor, Cope also relied on the trans-Atlantic slave trade to supply enslaved workers to his plantation; none of the captives purchased for Egypt were seasoned or

[270] DTT, July 3, 6, 1751, MONSON31/2.
[271] DTT, July 7, 1751, MONSON31/2.

acquired from other planters. All but one of the Africans arrived at the plantation with their shipmates, presumably after marching ninety miles from Kingston along hilly roads.[272]

[272] For Egypt, see, Hall, *In Miserable Slavery*, pp.26-29. For the arrival of the slaves, see, DTT, June 13, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, September 11, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, June 4, 1755, MONSON31/6. After 1755, Thistlewood's diary entries are not sufficiently descriptive to identify the newly purchased slaves. On January 13, 1756, for example, Thistlewood wrote that Cope had sent ten Africans to Egypt but he didn't provide any information that would indicate their names or the seasoning regime that he subjected them to (DTT, January 13, 1756, MONSON31/7). Although Thistlewood did not note in his diary where Cope had purchased the slaves, the records of the Dickinson plantation—situated in the adjacent parish of Saint Elizabeth's—indicate that planters purchased slaves in Kingston and marched them to the western end of the island. In June 1773, for example, Caleb Dickinson recorded an expense for "travelling with [10 New Negroes] from Kingston & advertising one that had stray'd away." Dickinson was likely leading the slaves to his Appleton Estate, of modern rum fame, in Black River, a distance of ninety-two miles from Kingston (Jamaican Plantation Records from the Dickinson Papers, 1675-1849, *BRRAM,* Accounts 1773, DN469). Cope may have accompanied the slaves as far as Savanna, but he had a trusted slave take them to Egypt (See for example, DTT, June 13, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, June 4, 1755, MONSON31/6).

Table 5.3: Twenty-five enslaved Africans brought to Egypt plantation, May 25, 1754-June 4, 1755

			Date of First Elopement	Date of First Sexual Encounter with TT	Date of First Punishment
May 25, 1754					
	Hector	Man	August 31, 1754		May 26, 1756
June 13, 1754					
	Adam	Man	July 19, 1754		
	Morris	Man	August 13, 1754		May 27, 1755
	Nero	Man	July 29, 1754		August 8, 1754
	Melia	Woman		November 19, 1754	
	Violet	Woman		September 25, 1754	May 17, 1755
	Doll	Woman	July 1, 1754	December 1, 1754	August 28, 1754
	Cloe	Woman	September 9, 1754		
	Moll	Woman		November 29, 1754	
September 11, 1754					
	Cobenna	Man	July 16, 1755		July 26, 1755
	Quacoo	Man	September 16, 1754		August 9, 1755
	Quaw	Man	June 30, 1755		
	Quamina	Man			
	Abraham	Boy	September 25, 1754		December 22, 1758
	Dover	Boy	September 25, 1754		August 24, 1758
June 4, 1755					
	Derby	Man	July 21, 1755		July 22, 1755
	Philip	Man	July 24, 1755		July 25, 1755
	Charles	Man	August 4, 1755		August 20, 1755
	Quaro	Man	June 28, 1755		June 28, 1755
	Toby	Man			August 7, 1758
	Johnie	Man			
	Primus	Man			
	Quasheba	Woman		August 12, 1755	July 8, 1755
	Philis	Woman		July 27, 1755	July 24, 1756
	Roseanna	Woman		January 18, 1755	

Source: DTT, 1754-1755, MONSON31/5-6. Thistlewood did not note the names of the Africans brought to the plantation on June 4, 1755, and so I determined their identities using other entries in Thistlewood's diaries.

On the day of the Africans' arrival at Egypt, Thistlewood renamed them, assigned them to the houses and grounds of the other slaves, and then almost immediately sent them to the field.[273] On June 14, 1754—just one day after the eight Gold Coast slaves arrived at Egypt—Thistlewood wrote that he had "ye New Negroes out at work with ye old ones;" Thistlewood sent the group of ten slaves brought to Egypt June 4, 1755 into the field "for the first time" just six days after their arrival.[274] When ten other slaves came to Egypt on January 13, 1756, they spent two days husking corn, a week weeding and "filling carts with dung," and then entered the field gang.[275] Approximately two months after arriving on the plantation, Thistlewood issued each of the Africans with a cooking pot, marking the moment when they were meant to start cooking crops grown in their provision grounds, such as black eyed peas and plantains, both of which Thistlewood issued to them in seed form. Thistlewood next gave the Africans a new dung basket, with which they were forced to haul twenty to thirty pound loads of manure from the pastures to the cane fields.[276] Thistlewood issued the basket between a month and two months after the Africans first came to the plantation, and so he must have assumed that the captives were capable of performing hard labor by that point. Africans brought to Egypt spent as little as a week, and

[273] The seasoned slaves may have played a role in re-naming the Africans. On May 25, 1754, for example, Cope bought an Igbo-speaking man and sent him up to the estate, where, Thomas Thistlewood recorded in his diary, "Our Negroes have Nam'd him Hector." Three weeks later, Thistlewood wrote that "we" named eight other slaves. (DTT, May 25, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, June 13, 1754, MONSON31/5). Thistlewood also distributed a "bill [cane knife] and hoe" to the new slaves as soon as they arrived on the plantation (DTT, September 11, 1754, MONSON31/5) and ordered the "old Negroes to take the New ones into their houses" (DTT, June 28, 1754, MONSON31/5).

[274] DTT, June 14, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, June 4, 1755, MONSON31/6.

[275] DTT, January 14, January 15, January 19, January 20, 1756, MONSON31/7.

[276] For the issuing of cooking pots, see, DTT, August 7, 1754, MONSON31/5. For the issuing of seeds for provision grounds, see, DTT, October 26, 1754, MONSON31/5. Prior to their crops bearing Thistlewood fed the Africans with rice, flour, fish, and plantains, and the occasional ration of tobacco (DTT, June 13, June 14, June 19, July 2, July 12, July 13, July 14, July 27, August 16, September 20, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, March 2, April 11, June 15, July 6, July 13, July 20, August 10, August 17, August 24, 1755, MONSON31/6. For tobacco, see, DTT, September 14, September 26, 1754, MONSON31/5). For the handing out of dung baskets, see, DTT, August 21, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, April 17, August 11, August 20, 1755, MONSON31/6; DTT, April 20, 1756, MONSON31/7.

sometimes just a single day, recovering from their grueling sea journey before they entered the field.[277]

African men tried to flee from Egypt to escape the grueling work regime. Thirteen of the seventeen African men eloped from the plantation, most within two months of their arrival at Egypt by which point they would have recovered a little of their strength (Table 5.3). Some fled almost immediately. Five days after he arrived on Egypt, for example, Quacoo escaped; nine days after that, Quacoo's shipmates, Abraham and Dover also fled.[278] No runaway managed to escape from Egypt, and they were typically brought back to the plantation with a day or two or their departure. Thistlewood did not always punish the Africans the first time they escaped; on July 4, 1756, for example, Thistlewood did not punish Quaw, one of the Africans purchased on September 11, 1754, who ran away on June 30, 1755, because it was his "first offence."[279] Thistlewood brutally punished repeat offenders, however. Morris, a Gold Coast slave brought to Egypt on June 28, 1754, escaped from the estate between May 1 and May 27. After being "brought back" by one of the other Egypt slaves, Thistlewood had Morris whipped.[280] Morris escaped again from June 19 until August 6. Thistlewood whipped Morris, branded him on the right cheek and had pothooks, an iron collar with long protruding hooks, put on him for two months, during which period Morris still managed to escape.[281] The life of Nero, who came to Egypt with Morris, gives some indication of why African men eloped from the plantation. On August 8, 1754, Thistlewood wrote that Nero "will not work" and that he had "threatened to cut

[277] Only four of the twenty-five Africans brought to Egypt performed did not work in the field, at least for a time. Abraham and Dover, two boys, were "put to look after the cattle," but were put into the field three years later, presumably when they reached adulthood (DTT, September 11, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, August 13, 1757, MONSON31/8; DTT, August 24, 1758, MONSON31/9). Johnie and Primus were likewise sent to tend cattle, at least until the end of 1757 (DTT, February 9, 1756, MONSON31/7; DTT, May 2, 1756, MONSON31/7).
[278] For Quacoo's elopement, see, DTT, September 11, 1754, MONSON31/5. For Dover and Abraham's escape, see, DTT, September 25, 1754, MONSON31/5.
[279] DTT, July 4, 1756, MONSON31/7.
[280] DTT, May 1-May 27, 1755, MONSON31/6.
[281] DTT, August 7, August 8, October 16, 1755, MONSON31/6.

his own throat." Thistlewood had Nero "stripped, whipped, gagged, and his hands tied behind his back, that the musquitoes and sand flies might torment him."[282] African men constantly tried to escape from Egypt by repeatedly running away, even if it meant that they would be brutally punished.

The case of Derby demonstrates how planters like Thistlewood tortured African men to break them to plantation labor during their seasoning. Derby arrived at Egypt on June 4, 1755, accompanied by four men, two teenage boys, and two women, having been purchased from a Gold Coast ship.[283] Just over a month later, Derby fled Egypt for the first time but was soon caught.[284] Thistlewood's reprisal was brutal: after being brought back to the estate on July 25, Derby was "given a good whipping and pickled well," probably with salt water being thrown onto his bleeding back, and then had pothooks locked onto his neck, which he had to wear for two weeks.[285] Derby was whipped again in October for "stealing corn" and then, in January 1756, was "accused of eating young canes," a dire offense in the eyes of whites who did not want their profits consumed by hungry slaves, and locked in the stocks overnight.[286] Thistlewood came up with a particularly sickening punishment: he "made Egypt [another slave] shit in [Derby's] mouth," a penalty that was thereon known as "Derby's dose."[287] Derby continued to run away and, after being caught again on March 16, 1755, Thistlewood wrote that he was sullen, refused to eat or drink and "does not care about whipping."[288] On August 4, Derby's short life on Egypt nearly ended when he was caught stealing corn and shot by an enslaved

[282] DTT, August 8, 1754, MONSON31/5. Nero died on October 8, 1754, apparently of an unnamed sickness that had afflicted him for at least a month (DTT, October 8, 1754, MONSON31/6).
[283] DTT, June 4, 1755, MONSON31/6.
[284] DTT, July 17, July 24, 1755, MONSON31/6.
[285] DTT, July 25, August 9, 1755, MONSON31/6.
[286] DTT, October 20, 1755, MONSON31/6; DTT, January 27, 1756, MONSON31/7.
[287] DTT, January 28, 1756, MONSON31/7. On May 26, 1756, Thistlewood caught Derby eating canes again and was given the same punishment (DTT, MONSON31/7).
[288] For Derby's elopements, see, DTT February 2, 4, March 13, 15, 1756, MONSON31/7. For Derby's refusal to work, see, DTT, March 16, 1756, MONSON31/7.

watchman—his "ear, cheek and jaw almost cut off."[289] Mutilated and crippled, Derby almost disappears from Thistlewood's diary until August 1758, when he was "put as a watchman," presumably because he was incapable of working in the field, effectively ending his career as a field slave just three years after his arrival.[290]

Women, by contrast, rarely fled from Egypt. Of the eight women brought to Egypt in 1754/55, just two eloped, none of whom were perennial runaways, and none of whom were punished for the supposed crime. Instead, the women practiced other forms of resistance: they stole canes, corn, and livestock; feigned illness; broke and lost their tools; and harbored runaways. Thistlewood whipped the women for these offenses, but they were rarely the victims of his most horrid punishments, with the notable exception of Phillis, an African woman who was given "Derbys dose" for breaking sugar cane in July 1756. No doubt the women carried out numerous other small acts of resistance that Thistlewood either did not notice, or did not record in his diaries. At the same time, however, all but one of the eight African women suffered sexual violence at Thistlewood's hands, and often on multiple occasions.[291]

While attorneys and planters like Simon Taylor may have carefully designed regimes to acclimatize Africans to American slavery, it was intimate contact with whites like Thomas Thistlewood that defined a person's experience of their seasoning. Overseers carefully rationed out food, and Africans went hungry as a result. They also forced Africans to work in the field within days of arriving on the plantation, back-breaking labor that must have been almost

[289] DTT, August 4, 1756, MONSON31/7.
[290] DTT, August 7, 1758, MONSON31/9.
[291] For women running away, see, DTT, July 1- 10, 1754, MONSON31/5; DTT, September 9-11, 1754, MONSON31/5. For feigning illness, see, DTT, May 16, 1755, MONSON31/6. For harboring runaways, see, DTT, January 7, 1756, MONSON31/7. For livestock theft, see, DTT, August 28, 1754, MONSON31/5. For breaking and losing tools, see, DTT, August 21, 1754, MONSON31/5. For stealing corn, see, DTT, October 20, 1755, MONSON31/6. For breaking canes, see, DTT, July 24, 1756, MONSON31/7. For Phillis' punishment, see, DTT, July 24, July 27, 1756, MONSON31/7.

impossible for weakly slaves to perform.[292] Overseers beat and tortured men like Derby to emasculate them and force them to work. Women faced corporal punishment as well as sexual violence. Whites like Thistlewood employed varying strategies to break newly arrived Africans to plantation labor, and men and women consequently experienced different, but equally grueling, ordeals during their seasoning.

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While healthy adult Africans began their seasoning on plantations, their sickly shipmates remained trapped aboard the ship or in a slave factor's yard. These captives had an entirely different experience during their seasoning because they were taken into Jamaica's internal slave trade. Studying how enslaved Africans were forced through this trade is difficult because no merchant engaged in the business left papers. Moreover, few of the numerous collections of Jamaican plantation papers record the purchase of enslaved people from merchants involved in the internal slave trade. This trade has consequently escaped the attention of historians. By combining a wide variety of sources from the late eighteenth century, however, the contours of the Jamaican slave trade, and the experiences of the Africans who were dragged into it, can be sketched for the first time.

The men and women who participated in the internal Jamaican slave trade can be divided into two groups: merchants who purchased large groups of unhealthy slaves at the tail end of slave sales and smaller traders who bought extremely sickly individuals for low prices at auction. The invoices for fifteen Kingston slave sales conducted during the 1780s and 1790s detail the

[292] A "Native of the West Indies," recalled that Africans who could not speak English, "pressed" their "open mouth and famish'd side," "Dumb appeals" for food that were "more forcible than any language whatever." (*Poems, on Subjects Arising in England, and the West Indies....* (London, 1783), p.30). A Jamaican planters also told Parliament that he had known Africans to be "put into the field two or three days after they have been purchased" (Testimony of Lieutenant Baker Davison in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.181).

names of the first group of people, and the number of Africans that they purchased (Table 5.4). No single buyer appeared at every single sale, and they ranged in size from merchants who purchased over one hundred slaves from a single vessel, to women who bought a handful of slaves. The largest purchasers of sickly slaves were Kington merchants, especially Sephardi like Alexandre Lindo, Hyem Cohen and David Henriques. British merchants such as Robert Jones, James Wedderburn, Richard Brisset and James Wildman were, however, equally involved in the business. Evidently, speculators engaged in Jamaica's slave trade were socially and culturally diverse. [293]

Guinea factors invited these men and women to attend the slave sales after the conclusion of the first day, by which time the healthiest "prime" slaves would have already been sold to planters such as Simon Taylor. Merchants picked out any captive who met a minimum criteria of health. The unhealthy captives from the ship *Emelia* were, for example, were landed ashore in Kingston in 1784 and made to sit in the "the accustomed place of sale" according to Falconbridge, the ship's surgeon. Merchants entered the yard and "examine[d]" the Africans by making them "stand up, in order to see if there be any discharge" from their anuses, which would indicate that the captives suffered from flux. "[W]hen they do not perceive this appearance," he continued, "they consider it a symptom of recovery" and purchased the slaves. Merchants thus purchased emaciated and weakly Africans ignored by planters, but not the sickliest slaves.[294]

[293] According to retired Jamaican planter Hercules Ross, "a number of people" in Kingston "speculated in the purchase of the Slaves left after the first day's sale" (Testimony of Hercules Ross, *HCSP,* 93, p.257).
[294] Merchants paid fixed prices for the captives they purchased, regardless of their age and sex, implying that their health was the most important criteria. When David Henriques purchased 16 men, 12 women, 20 boys and 10 girls at the *Ruby's* sale in 1789, for example, he paid £48 per person (*Ruby,* JRP, C107/13, TNAUK). Falconbridge, *Account,* p.46.

Table 5.4: Purchasers of unhealthy Africans at end of fifteen Kingston slave sales, 1784-1797

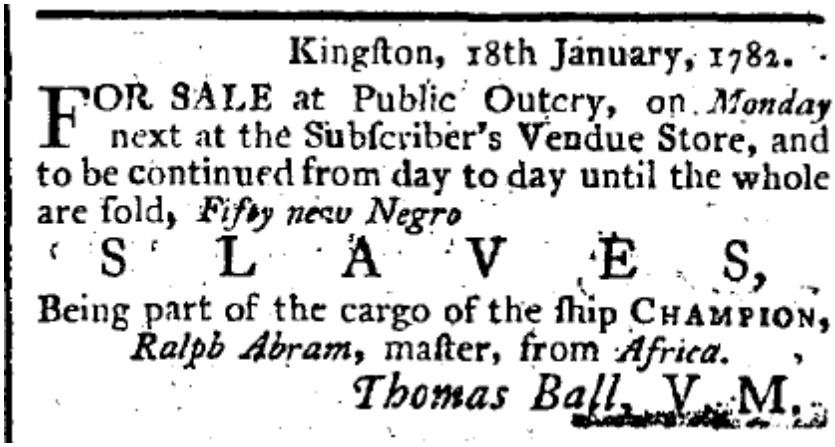
Ship Name	Year	Total number of people Sold	Number of unhealthy slaves sold at end of sale	% of unhealthy slaves sold at end of sale	Number of purchasers of unhealthy Slaves	Principal Purchaser of Remaining Slaves (and number purchased)
Golden Age	1784	503	237	47%	6	Alexandre Lindo (144)
Alert	1788	262	33	13%	3	Hyem Cohen (30)
James	1789	150	12	8%	4	Elizabeth Woodstock (5)
Chambres	1789	216	26	12%	4	Alexandre Lindo (13)
Diana	1789	299	32	11%	4	Robert Jones (26)
Lovely Lass	1789	393	38	10%	2	Aaron Levi Moreno (18)
Hannah	1789	294	60	20%	12	James Wedderburn (18)
Ruby	1789	150	61	41%	3	David Henriques (58)
Sarah	1793	130	70	54%	9	Richard Brissett (33)
Enterprise	1793	356	26	7%	2	David Henriques (24)
Fanny	1793	224	51	23%	4	Lawrence & Thomas Holcombe (41)
Jenny	1793	258	25	10%	5	Sarah Allwood (7)
Rodney	1793	324	124	38%	11	Robert Porter (19)
Lottery	1795	453	83	18%	1	Hyem Cohen (83)
Earl of Liverpool	1797	337	30	9%	4	James Wildman (30)
		4,349	**908**	**21%**		

Source: *Golden Age*, *Earl of Liverpool*, Stanley Dumbell Papers, GB141 MS.10, University of Liverpool Library; *Alert, James, Chambres, Diana,* and *Lovely Lass,* "A Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into Losses Which May Have Been Sustained by Owners of Ships or Vessels Engaged in the African Trade. . . . ," in Minchinton ed., *American Papers in the House of Lords Record Office*; *Hannah* and *Jenny,* Thomas Leyland Company account books, 1789-1790, 1792-1793, William Clements Library, Michigan; *Ruby,* JRP, C107/13, TNAUK; *Sarah, Fanny, Rodney,* JRP, C107/59, TNAUK; *Enterprize,* DX/1732, MMM; *Lottery,* 387.MD.41, LRO.

The Guinea factor sent the unhealthiest slaves, who did not meet even the speculators' minimum standards of health, to auction, or "vendue" as it was known. "[E]very person employed about the streets betwixt the wharves and vendue stores," Jamaican planter Hercules Ross told Parliament, "had almost daily opportunities of observing" Africans being "landed in a very weak and wretched condition to be sold at vendue." Vendue masters advertised the sales of

enslaved Africans, which drew down numerous speculators who "made a trade in purchasing refuse Slaves… for very little money," as another Jamaican planter testified. Auctions began at ten o'clock in the morning, and each slave was carried out to the block, where they must have lay or sat given their weakened state, before being sold for small sums. Auctions continued "from day to day" until every slave was sold (Figure 5.2).[295]

Figure 5.2: Advertisement for the vendue sale of fifty-two enslaved Africans from the *Champion,* January 18, 1782



Kingſton, 18th January, 1782.

FOR SALE at Public Outcry, on *Monday* next at the Subſcriber's Vendue Store, and to be continued from day to day until the whole are ſold, *Fifty new Negro*

S L A V E S,

Being part of the cargo of the ſhip CHAMPION, *Ralph Abram*, maſter, from *Africa*.

Thomas Ball, V. M.

Source: *Supplement to the Royal Gazette,* Kingston, January 19, 1782.

Poor whites and mixed-race people typically purchased slaves at vendue in the hope of earning a hefty profit on their recovery. These traders carried or stretchered the Africans back to their houses, and there attempted to restore them to at least a modicum of health. Given that the captives were sickly, however, large numbers of them died before they could be re-sold, or indeed during their sale: it was not unusual for captives to be landed "in the agonies of death" and then to die "in the piazza of the vendue master" as Hercules Ross stated. Purchasers who bought captives for "a few dollars" had neither an incentive, nor the means, to spend large

[295] Testimony of Hercules Ross in Lambert ed., *HCSP*, 73, p.261. Testimony of Drewery Ottley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.184. For advertisements for vendue sales of newly imported Africans, see for example, *Royal Gazette,* Kingston, June 26, 1779; July 7, 1780; May 10, 1782; July 5, 1790; September 10, 1790; November 18, 1790; May 30, 1794; January 10, 1795; November 11, 1795.

amounts on expensive medicines. Instead, they gave the Africans rudimentary care and hoped that they would recover from their illnesses. When they found "to the contrary of their expectations," slave ship officer James Morley told Parliament, or found that healing the slave would cost "more than they gave for them," then they turned the African out onto the streets. Morley saw slaves lying about "the beach" and the "market place" and in the "different parts of the town" who had been sold at vendue from his own ship, "in a very bad condition, and apparently nobody to take care of them." Those Africans who survived their imprisonment faced one of two fates: they were either re-sold, or kept by buyers who wanted to enter the ranks of slaveholding society.[296]

The merchants who took off the largest groups of captives likewise sought to force enslaved Africans in one of two subsequent directions. According to Jamaican slave factor John Tailyour, the "Jews" who bought large numbers of sickly slaves made "a business of fattening them & retailing them out singly" or sold the Africans "to Foreigners." The absence of foreign buyers from Jamaican slave sale invoices indicates that Tailyour was likely correct. Most of the Jewish slave traders were Sephardi whose families had immigrated to Jamaica after residing in the Spanish, French, Dutch or Portuguese colonies. They therefore possessed the cultural and familial connections to vend captives to visiting foreign buyers, who sailed to Jamaica from nearby Cuba, Saint Domingue, Honduras, and the Cayman Islands between November and

[296] Testimony of Hercules Ross in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.261. After the sale of the *Daniel's* 126 slaves in Grenada in August 1791, the factors told the vessel's owner that "we are reproached every day with some of the different parcels we sold having died in 24 hours – six of those sold at vendue died immediately" (James Baillie Jr. & Co. to James Rogers, Grenada, October 31, 1791, JRP, C107/8, TNAUK). For the sale of slaves at vendue, see also, Falconbridge, *Account*, p.43; Testimony of James Towne in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.25; Testimony of William Fitzmaurice in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* p.233; Testimony of Major General Tottenham in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 82, p.127. Testimony of James Morley in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.159. There is no direct evidence of the destination of Africans after their sale at vendue, but Falconbridge said that poor people purchased slaves "upon speculation" implying that they were re-selling them at a profit (Falconbridge, *Account,* p.43). Morley wrote that "poorer inhabitants of the islands" could "scarcely spare the sum that is given" but they paid it "to have a slave" (Testimony of James Morley in Clarkson, *Substance,* p.76).

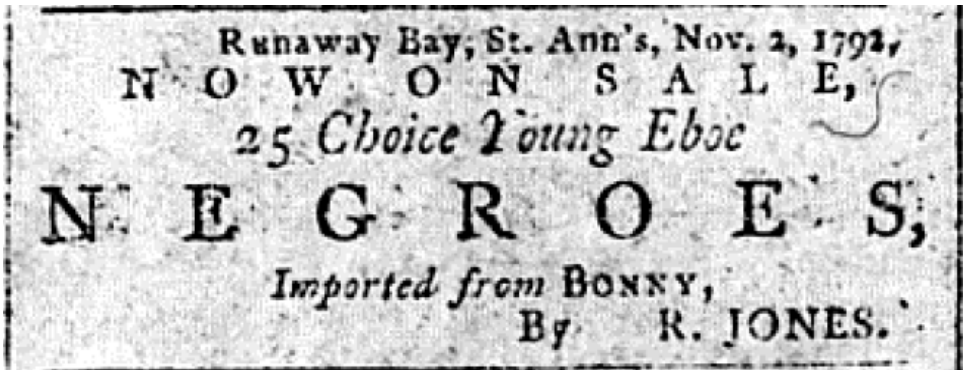
March, hoping to purchase captives with specie. Merchants therefore shipped Africans off when domestic demand was low, and foreign demand high; they resold Africans in the island when Jamaican demand rose. In 1794, for example, when planter demand remained robust, ten percent of imported Africans were subsequently re-exported from Jamaica. Between 1795 and 1797, when Jamaican demand sagged with the worsening military situation in the Caribbean, thirty-one percent of slaves brought to Kingston were bought by foreigners, some of whom came from as far away as Trinidad, twelve hundred miles to the east. When Jamaican demand picked back up again in 1798 and 1799, re-exports dropped back to four percent. Jamaica's internal slave trade was therefore linked to the inter-colonial slave trade. Merchants kept sickly Africans on the island or embarked them for another colony depending on both Jamaican and foreign planters' demand.[297]

When merchants elected to keep Africans on the island, they either held them in Kingston or force-marched them to another town. Merchants advertised groups of recently imported captives in Kingston, Montego Bay, Clarendon and Spanish Town, all of which were either major ports themselves, or towns that sat astride busy roads. During the 1780s and 1790s, Sephardic merchant David Henriques, for example, sold hundreds of captives in Spanish Town, the major crossroads for travelers coming to, and departing Kingston from the north and west sides of the island. Other merchants took groups of captives to distant ports that seldom, if ever, received direct shipments of slaves. Robert Jones, a merchant in Runaway Bay, Saint Ann's, a port seldom visited by slave ships on Jamaica's sparsely settled north-eastern coast, advertised

[297] For the Jewish population of Kingston see Mordechai Arbell, *The Portuguese Jews in Jamaica* (Kingston, 2000); Eli Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade: Setting the Record Straight* (New York: NYU Press, 1998), pp.57-90. For the re-export of slaves from Kingston, see, John Tailyour to James Jones, Kingston, Jamaica, May 30, 1788, TFP, WCL; John Tailyour to John & Alexander Anderson, Kingston, 9 August 1789, TFP, WCL; John Tailyour to John & Alexander Anderson, Kingston, 12 July 1789, TFP, WCL; John Tailyour to Thomas Jones, Kingston, 21 July 1788, TFP, WCL). *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica* (Jamaica, 1810), Vol 10, pp.367-372. For the inter-colonial slave trade, see especially, O'Malley, *Final Passages.*

"25 Choice Young Eboe" slaves in November 2, 1792, who had been "Imported from Bonny," likely in the ship *Thomas,* whose sale opened in Kingston on October 19, 1792 (Figure 5.3). The *Thomas* sale was concluded in three days, and so the twenty-five Africans likely spent eleven days travelling to Saint Ann's. Jones also purchased twenty-six captives from the *Diana* in 1789, and forty Igbo speakers from the *Rodney* in 1795, both of which landed their captives at Kingston. All of these captives faced a forty-mile journey over mountainous terrain, an exhausting journey for sickly Africans who were, as Falconbridge described, "unable to stand but for a very short time."[298]

Figure 5.3: Advertisement for the sale of twenty-five enslaved people by R[obert] Jones, November 2, 1792


Runaway Bay, St. Ann's, Nov. 2, 1792.
NOW ON SALE,
25 Choice Young Eboe
NEGROES,
Imported from BONNY,
By R. JONES.

Source: *Post-Script to the Royal Gazette,* Kingston, November 3, 1792.

Merchants imprisoned recently purchased captives in stores, yards, and livestock pens, usually in groups. The smallest traders offered just "a few" slaves for sale; the largest merchants imprisoned as many as 129 slaves in their presumably extensive store-cum-barracoons. The memoirs of Mr. de Laujon, a Frenchman who speculated in buying and selling unhealthy

[298] For advertisements by slave retailers in Kingston, see, *Royal Gazette,* Kingston, December 7, 1782; January 25, 1783; March 3, 1790; September 4, 1790; January 30, 1794; April 17, 1794. In Spanish Town, see, July 3, 1790; December 1, 1791. In Montego Bay, see, December 10, 1790. In Saint Ann's, see, March 17, 1792; November 2, 1792; January 10, 1795; June 13, 1795. In Port Maria, see, December 8, 1792. In Clarendon, see, October 9, 1793; June 12, 1794; August 6, 1794; January 16, 1795. For the *Thomas'* sale, see, *Royal Gazette,* October 20, 1792; Taylor, Ballantine & Fairlie to John Tailyour, Kingston, October 22, 1792, TFP, WCL. For the *Diana's* sale, see, "Report of the Commissioners," fols.347-49. For the *Rodney's* slaves, see, *Royal Gazette,* Kingston, June 13, 1795. For Jones' other sales, see, *Royal Gazette,* March 17, 1792; June 13, 1795. Falconbridge, *Account,* p.46

captives in Saint Marc, Saint Domingue, in the 1780s, are revealing of the merchants' motivations and strategies. Laujon entered the trade after being told by a planter friend that it would be profitable to buy "some of the negroes of the tail of the cargo," who had "various illnesses," because they "cost very little." He was instructed to "look after them some time," and "take great care" of them by allowing them to "convalesce" on a plantation, where they "would not be engaged in any work." Laujon followed his friend's advice and purchased "6 negroes, belonging to the tail of the cargo [*queue de cargaison*]," who he clothed with shirts, trousers and handkerchiefs. He lodged the captives on his friend's plantation near Saint Marc and visited them on a regular basis. Once his six "invalids" (*malades)* were "perfectly recovered," he sold them at a hefty profit. A recent archaeological analysis of the Hibbert House, the residence of Thomas Hibbert—the most "eminent Guinea factor" in Kingston—gives a glimpse of how captives may have been offered for sale to planter customers in Jamaica. The Hibbert House's extensive basement included a "slave cellar," a "barrel-vaulted cell" with a "single strong door" that was "illuminated through a single barred window opening" where Africans would have been imprisoned. During the day, Hibbert's assistants led the captives out of the cell and up a set of stairs to an enclosed courtyard at the rear of the building. Planter customers then passed through the ground floor of the building and stood on a balcony overlooking the yard, from which they selected Africans.[299]

Africans spent weeks, and sometimes months, imprisoned by merchants. In March 1790, four Africans fled from the house of a merchant in Kingston's east end. The men, who each wore

[299] *Royal Gazette,* June 12, 1794 ("a few"); *Royal Gazette,* December 1, 1791 ("129"). A de Laujon, *Souvenirs de trente annees de Voyages a Saint-Domingue…* (Paris, 1835), pp.294-7, 294, 295, 296. Laujon's friend also advised him that he could also profit by purchasing runaway slaves from the jail, and then collecting the rewards for their return from their masters. Laujon purchased four such captives from the jail, and lodged them with the sickly Africans. Louis Nelson, *Architecture and Empire in Jamaica* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp.32-35.

an "oznaburgh frock and trowsers, with a blue handkerchief and felt hat," were likely part of a much larger group and had been trapped in the house of Abraham Bernal and Moses Henriques, a Sephardic firm engaged in the slave retailing business, for six weeks after their sale from a slave ship. In January 1793, slave factors John Cunningham and John Perry sold 202 people from the *African Queen* at Montego Bay. Upon their arrival in the port, the captives were "very Meagre," many of whom were "dying daily," from a flux that had already killed ninety-eight of their shipmates on the Middle Passage. Although Cunningham and Perry gave the captives "a good Feeding" for sixteen days prior to the opening of the sale, the Africans were still emaciated and sickly when they were finally offered for sale. On the fifth day of the sale, eighty-two captives remained unsold. A consortium of four Montego Bay merchants made "an offer" for seventy of the captives at £40 per person, leaving twelve "sick & very Meagre" slaves to be sold at vendue for £140. Just over a month later, Perry reported that the merchants could not "boast of their bargain" having only sold twenty-five of the seventy Africans, who presumably remained imprisoned in Montego Bay.[300]

Sickly Africans thus spent weeks aboard slave ships in drawn out sales, and then several additional weeks in the yards and houses of colonial merchants. Spotlighting Alexander Johnston, who bought several African slaves from merchants engaged in the internal slave trade during the 1760s, reveals the fates of these captives after their sale. Johnston emigrated from his native Scotland to Saint Ann's Jamaica in 1763, aged twenty-four, where he established himself as a plantation doctor. Like other middling whites in Jamaica, Johnston sought to make his fortune by purchasing slaves and either hiring them out, or forcing them to work on a small

[300] *Royal Gazette,* Kingston, March 3, 1790. For Bernal & Henriques, see also, *Royal Gazette,* February 4, 1781. John Perry to James Rogers, Montego Bay, January 21, 1793, JRP, C107/13, TNAUK. John Cunningham to James Rogers, Montego Bay, February 4, 1759, JRP, C107/59, TNAUK. John Perry to James Rogers, Montego Bay, March 10, 1759, JRP, C107/59, TNAUK.

plantation. Johnston purchased numerous Africans from local slave dealers. Sometime in 1766, he bought three African women from Aaron Baruh Lousada, a Jewish retailer who purchased groups of captives in Kingston and marched them to Saint Ann's. Johnston purchased other slaves from local retailers. In July 1770, he bought two women and a child from merchants James Draper and James Holden, two men who retailed Africans together: a woman he renamed Polly, another woman he renamed Sally, and Sally's child Little Polly, who was "about 1 year old." A month later he bought a boy who he named Junius from Benjamin Grimes, "a man who bro[ugh]t New Negroes" from Kingston. Between 1765 and 1770, Johnston thus bought seven Africans from slave retailers, one man, three women, two girls, and one boy.[301]

Johnston obtained other captive laborers from numerous sources, however. Sometime before 1767, Johnston visited Kingston and purchased at least five teenage boys from a slave ship—his only visit to a slave ship before October 1775. Johnston obtained the rest of his laborers from middling whites in Saint Ann's: he bought three captives from the marshal, who was likely liquidating a local planters' assets; thirteen slaves from seven other planters in the district; and a woman and her two children from a local merchant who also sold Africans (Table 5.5). Middling Jamaican colonists traded large numbers of enslaved Africans, a business that Johnston himself participated in: four months after Johnston obtained a woman named Betty for just ten shillings as part of a judgement against a neighboring estate in November 1767, he re-sold her for £15. In October 1770, Johnston similarly sold a boy named Romeo who he had purchased himself from another planter just nine months earlier. Johnston's slave purchasing pattern differed remarkably from those of sugar planters. While eminent planters such as Simon

[301] For the strategies of middling whites in Jamaica, see, Testimony of Lewis Cuthbert, in *Minutes of the Evidence…,* p.77. Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, Powel Family Papers Collections 1582 (PFP), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), July 9, 1770. For Johnston, see, Alan Karras, "The World of Alexander Johnston: The Creolization of Ambition, 1762–1787," *The Historical Journal* 30, no. 1 (March 1987), pp.53–76. Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, August 31, 1770.

Taylor typically purchased groups of adults directly from slave ships or entire gangs of seasoned slaves, Johnston bought individual enslaved people who ranged in age: from newborns all the way up to thirty-five-year-old men and women. The slave retailing business therefore fit into a much larger internal slave trade in Jamaica within which middling whites bought and sold small numbers of enslaved people of all ages.[302]

[302] In an inventory of his twenty enslaved workers, taken on December 1, 1769, Johnston noted that he had bought five boys from Hibberts & Jackson, one of the largest slave factoring firms in Kingston (Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, December 1, 1769). Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, November 23, 1767; Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, March 8, 1768.

Table 5.5: Thirty-one enslaved people purchased by Alexander Johnston, c.1765-1770

Date Purchased	Name	Age when Purchased	Age/ Gender	Purchased From	Fate
< 1767	Denis	7	Boy	Marshall	
< 1767	Fidelia	25	Woman	Marshall	
< 1767	Bristol	16	Boy	Slave Ship	
< 1767	Galen	15	Boy	Slave Ship	
< 1767	George	16	Boy	Slave Ship	
< 1767	Forrester	15	Boy	Slave Ship	
< 1767	Quashey	16	Boy	Slave Ship	
< 1767	Prince	25	Man	Planter	
< 1767	**Mary**	20	Man	Merchant	
< 1767	**[Unknown]**	?	Man	Merchant	Died, c.1768
< 1767	**[Unknown]**	?	Man	Merchant	Died, c.1768
< 1767	Susannah	20	Man	Planter	
Oct 1767	Betty	?	Woman	Marshall	Sold, March 1768
Sept 1769	Statyra	16	Girl	Planter	
Oct 1769	Celia	35	Woman	Planter	
Oct 1769	Tom	30	Man	Planter	
Nov 1769	Camberwell	30	Man	Planter	
Nov 1769	Cupar	35	Man	Planter	
Nov 1769	Chloe	25	Woman	Planter	
Nov 1769	Love	20	Woman	Planter	
Nov 1769	Molly	4 mos.	Girl	Planter	
Nov 1769	Nelly	1	Girl	Planter	
Dec 1769	Stella	25	Woman	Merchant	
Dec 1770	Cudjoe	2	Boy	Merchant	
Dec 1770	Romeo Minor	4	Boy	Merchant	
Jan 1770	Romeo	14	Boy	Planter	Sold, Oct 1770
Feb 1770	Cretia	12	Boy	Planter	Died, Dec 1770
Jul 1770	**Betty**	16	Girl	Merchant	Died, Sept 1770
Jul 1770	**Sally**	21	Woman	Merchant	Died, Sept 1770
Jul 1770	**Little Polly**	1	Girl	Merchant	Died, Oct 1770
August 1770	**Junius**	?	Boy	Merchant	

Source: Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP. Slaves in bold are Africans, who Johnston identified by referring to them as "New Negroes" in his daybook.

Johnston paid high prices for the Africans whom he purchased from slave retailers, and so he must have assumed that they were all in good health. When Johnston bought three women from Lousada, for example, he paid £160 for them, or £53 each, around the price of a "prime" slave sold from a slave ship in the same period. Johnston paid for the captives by giving Lousada his bond, indicating that slave retailers were, like Guinea factors, willing to sell slaves on credit. Within a year of purchasing the Africans, however, one of the women hanged herself, and another died "of a Dropsy." Reflecting on his financial losses in his day book, Johnston rued that Lousada had duped him by selling sickly slaves. Johnston paid equally high prices for the three captives from Draper, but all three of the slaves perished from diseases that they may have contracted on the slave ship: Sally and Polly died from flux, and Little Polly died of Guinea worms, all within three months of Johnston purchasing them.[303] Of the seven Africans who Johnston purchased from retailers, then, just five survived their seasoning.

Johnston briefly tried to enter the slave retailing business in 1776, giving a brief glimpse of the terrible mortality rates suffered by captives in the hands of merchants engaged in Jamaica's internal slave trade. Between 1771 and 1775, Johnston bought no other slaves, while he settled his existing gang on a small plantation. In 1775/6, however, he purchased thirty-seven African women, six men, and three girls from four different slave ships at Montego Bay and Saint Ann's, all of whom he paid high prices for, indicating that he sought to join planters like

[303] For the purchase of the three slaves from Lousada, see, Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, June 1771. In September 1764, for example, 230 enslaved people from the slave ship *African* sold at Kingston for £47 each (Donnan, *Documents,* II). For the death of the two women, see, Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, September 24, 1770. For Johnston's anger at Lousada, see, Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, January 1, 1771. Johnston spent £117 on the three captives (Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, July 9, 1770). Johnston bought Junius for £52 (Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, August 31, 1770). For the deaths of Sally, Polly, and Little Jolly, see, Daybook of Alexander Johnston 1767-1777, PFP, HSP, September 4, 1770 (Sally); September 26, 1770 (Little Polly); October 12, 1770 (Polly).

Simon Taylor in only buying healthy adult slaves.[304] On October 17, 1776, Johnston bought five men and an African woman from the ship *Gregson* at Montego Bay, and paid £348 for them, £58 per person. Johnston later returned to the same ship and purchased a man and three girls who, he noted in his daybook, were "Refuse" because they were "sickly." Johnston paid just £16 for each of them, whom he renamed Lucy, Polly, Chance, and Sally. On December 3, Johnston wrote in his daybook that all four of the Africans had died: Lucy on October 24, just one week after the sale; Polly on October 29; Chance on November 4; and Sally on November 25. By comparison, just one of the African men whom Johnston purchased from the *Gregson* perished in the same period.

Johnston's example illuminates a large and well-organized slave trade internal to Jamaica within which large numbers of enslaved Africans perished. During Johnston's brief experience in the trade every single one of the Africans he purchased died shortly after, indicating that the mortality rates suffered by enslaved people within Jamaica's internal trade was extremely high. The Africans whom he bought himself from slave retailers also perished in large numbers. Although broader estimates for the mortality suffered by sickly slaves in this deadly trade are scant, James Ramsay estimated that "not more than one in three" of these Africans remained alive after three years, a staggering loss of sixty-six percent. By contrast, historians of plantation slavery have found that mortality during seasoning was between ten and twenty-five percent within three years of an Africans' arrival. Historians need, then, to look closely at the substantial

[304] Johnson bought four women on November 3, 1775; twelve women from the *Jane,* Wotherspoon, on November 23, 1775; twenty women on March 21, 1776; five men and one woman; and a man and three girls he called "refuse" on the same day; and ten men all on October 17, 1776.

domestic slave trade that operated in American colonies if they want to understand the experience of enslaved Africans after their sale.[305]

*

In the second half of the eighteenth century, West Indian planters codified a seasoning system that would, they cynically claimed, force Africans to become obedient slaves by inuring them to labor over a long period. This chapter has demonstrated that this system was a discourse created by plantation owners far from the cane fields and merchants' yards where enslaved Africans were actually seasoned. Africans taken to sugar plantations did not spend years or even months being "familiarized to labour by gentle degrees," as Grainger advised. Instead, overseers forced enslaved Africans into the field gang almost from the moment they arrived as they sought to meet the plantation owner's "expectations" for high output and profits. This constant contradiction between the plantation owners' desire to keep output up while ostensibly caring for the lives of the Africans they enslaved is encapsulated in a letter from William Vassal, an absentee owner of a Jamaican sugar plantation. Vassal wanted to "make good crops," he told his attorney, so that he could support his family's lavish lifestyle; in the same sentence he insisted that he wanted the slaves to be "spared & treated kindly & not overworked." These two priorities were incompatible, however, and planters consistently choose to "make good crops" by having

[305] James Ramsay, *Objections to the abolition of the slave trade* (London, 1788), pp.70-71. See also, Testimony of James Ramsay in *Report of the Lords,* pp.141-42. J.R. Ward performed the most comprehensive study of mortality during seasoning in 1988, using a variety of British Caribbean planter papers, and calculated that, in the second half of the eighteenth century, deaths of New Negroes during their first three years in the Americas "averaged about 15 or 20 per cent." (J. R Ward, *British West Indian Slavery, 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.127). Michael Craton used the records of three Jamaican planters and found that around one third of imported slaves died within three years (Michael Craton, "Jamaican Slave Mortality: Fresh Light from Worthy Park, Longville and the Tharp Estates," *Journal of Caribbean History* III (1971), p.26). Looking at North America, Philip D. Morgan, estimated that "as many as a quarter of Virginia's new arrivals died within their first year of arrival." (Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint,* p.444). Herbert Klein, by contrast, called "high mortality" due to seasoning a "popular myth" and argued that a morality rate of 25 per cent is probably "quite high," referencing a study on the Cuban slave trade that only put it at 10 per cent (Klein, *Atlantic Slave Trade,* pp.172-173).

Africans slaves "overworked," whether they admitted it or not. Enslaved Africans consequently marched from slave ships to plantations where overseers forced them to perform the back breaking labor of cutting and harvesting cane, a task they might subsequently perform for the remainder of their lives.[306]

As many as a fifth of the enslaved people carried to Jamaica experienced their seasoning within a domestic slave trade, not on plantations. Merchants and speculators purchased tens, and sometimes over a hundred, sickly Africans and either kept them in port, or carted them to distant towns where slaving vessels seldom put in. Perhaps two-thirds of these sickly slaves subsequently died on the wagons and boats that took them away from the sales, and in the yards and warehouses of their purchasers. Those Africans who survived this ordeal to be sold to planters like Alexander Johnston rarely lived for long periods. The human cost of slave seasoning was thus extremely high, not just on the plantations that historians have heretofore studied, but in the yards of merchants who made a business of buying sickly slaves and re-selling them.

[306] Grainger, *Treatment and Management,* p.11. William Vassal to John Wedderburn, Boston, April 23, 1773 in *The Vassal Letter Books, 1769-1800* (Wakefield: Micro Methods Ltd, 1963).

Conclusion

In 1787, Ottobah Cuogano painfully recounted his experience of the Long Middle Passage, seventeen years after he had first been dragged into the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In 1770, the thirteen year old Cugoano was out gathering fruit and catching birds in the woods near his home with a large group of children, thirty miles north of the Gold Coast, when "several great ruffians" claimed that the children had "committed a great fault against their lord." After being separated from his playmates, Cugoano was marched off to a nearby town and, six days later, he was taken to the sea to be sold. While some people were, like Cuogano, quickly marched to the coast and sold, innumerable others were purchased by African slave holders and retained in the interior, depending on their physical attributes and cultural background. As Cuogano wrote of his playmates, some were "gone to the sea side" to be sold to Europeans, while others were "gone to the fields" to work as African slaves.[307]

When Cuogano arrived at the sea, his captor brought him to a "castle" where he saw "several white people" who he thought would eat him. Cuogano, a thirteen-year-old boy at the time of his enslavement, was immediately purchased by a British fort officer, presumably because he was sufficiently tall and healthy to pass the slave traders' criteria. Other Africans, however, underwent repeated inspections and sales after being rejected by several captains; when James Albert Gronisaw, a fifteen-year-old boy, arrived on the Gold Coast in the same period as Cuogano, a French captain refused to buy him because he was "too small" and so he was instead taken "a few days after" to a Dutch ship and sold.[308] Enslaved people boarded slave ships, as Gronisaw poignantly remembered, "without a friend or any means to procure one," because the

[307] Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species: Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great Britain* (London, 1787), pp.6-12.
[308] James Albert Groniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Groniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself. With a Preface by W. Shirley* (Kidderminster, 1772), pp.12-13.

African slave trade and the process of sale on the coast separated them from family members, fellow villagers, and even people with whom they had been enslaved in the interior.

Cugoano spent three days in the fort's dungeon before he was led down to the beach and forced onto a boat that took him out to the dreaded slave ships. "[T]here was," Cugoano remembered of the trip to the boat, "nothing to be heard but rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and the groans and cries of our fellow men." After a terrifying voyage off the coast, Cuogano arrived at the slave ship where the captain likely subjected him to another inspection before pushing him below decks. Cuogano and the other Africans were packed tightly together for months "in sight of our native land," and forced into wretched "holes," as Cuogano described them—the cramped and steamy rooms below deck. As the ship neared its departure from the coast, Cuogano and the other children may have been taken out of the rooms and put above deck, but women and men were kept below in the rooms where they could not even move from their position. As Cuogano wrote of his own experience on the ship, "death was more preferable than life" for the Africans who were locked in the dank holds of a ship. Cugoano could not even describe the "base treatment" that he and the other Africans met with on the Middle Passage, except to say that one "succeeding woe, and dread, swelled up another." As the ship crossed the Atlantic, Cuogano likely witnessed his shipmates sicken and die in large numbers, and an equal number of his companions reduced to wraiths by the vestiges of disease.

Cugoano's captors landed him and his shipmates to Grenada, but he might have been dragged to any of Britain's numerous American colonies, given the way that captains steered their ships through the Caribbean. Had the captain made a different calculation, Cuogano might have been landed in Barbados or any number of the small islands in the eastern Caribbean, or he may have been forced to undertake an exhausting additional voyage to Jamaica or North

America. Cuogano did not describe how he was sold in Grenada, but he could have any number of experiences. Most Africans spent weeks, and sometimes months, trapped aboard slave ships or imprisoned in the yards of American merchants where they were subjected to repeated inspections by colonists. Others underwent violent single-day scramble sales where planters literally hauled them away from their shipmates in order to obtain new workers.

Cuogano was marched from the sale yard to a sugar plantation. Cugoano's "seasoning" consisted of a brutal introduction to hard-labor that was marked by "dreadful scenes of misery and cruelty." He saw Africans "cruelly lashed," and "cut to pieces, for the most trifling faults." Some who were "pressed with hunger and hard labour" stole sugar cane and were "struck over the face to knock their teeth out." Cuogano was witness to the realities of a seasoning regime that planters throughout the British Americas employed: they forced Africans to perform hard labor soon after their arrival, and brutally punished anyone who resisted. Had he fallen ill on the Middle Passage, Cuogano may well have been bought by a merchant and forced into Grenada's domestic slave trade, and later re-sold.

Unlike most of the Africans who undertook the Long Middle Passage, Cuogano was "delivered from … that horrid and brutal slavery" when an English visitor to Grenada purchased him to work as a servant, likely because of his young age. Although Cuogano escaped from slavery, it was "still grievous" to him to think that "thousands more" Africans suffered "in similar and greater distress" within the slave trade. By the time Cuogano wrote his memoirs in 1787, 2.4 million people had been enslaved and sold to British captains; in the twenty years before Britain abolished its slave trade, another 760,000 Africans were also carried off in British slave ships.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have proposed a framework that will enable historians to discern how these millions of people, denied the chance to record their own life stories, experienced their enslavement. I have argued that the most important factor that shaped a person's movement through the slave trade was their health, because slave traders utilized a complicated system by which they commodified Africans according to their physical characteristics. They measured them to determine their height, forced them through humiliating and invasive inspections to find signs of illness, and then assigned them a price according to their physical characteristics. Captives who met the traders' strict criteria became, in the parlance of the trade, a "prime slave"—a homogenous unit that was equal to other "prime" slaves of the same age and gender. Enslaved Africans who fell ill during the Long Middle Passage ceased to be prime slaves in the eyes of the traders, and they labelled them instead, in the derogatory language of the trade, as "the refuse." An African might consequently travel through numerous stages of the Long Middle Passage with another person, but then find themselves separated by ruthless slave traders if they contracted an illness. As former captain John Newton astutely observed, slave traders in the Atlantic World "separated" enslaved people "as sheep and lambs are separated by the butcher."[309] Africans rejected by one group of slave traders faced entirely different fates to their healthy companions. On the African coast, sickly people were marched back into the African interior by their captors or forced through additional sales, while others from the same coffle boarded a ship. Upon arrival in the Americas, unhealthy Africans entered an internal slave trade while their shipmates worked on plantations. The direction that an African took through the Long Middle Passage, and ultimately his or her fate, was thus powerfully shaped by the decisions of slave traders on both sides of the Atlantic, who commodified people according to their physical characteristics.

[309] Testimony of John Newton in Lambert ed., *HCSP,* 73, p.144.

Slave traders also sorted people according to their age and gender, and Africans could thus experience each stage of the Long Middle Passage differently to another person of a different age or sex. Europeans used a system to purchase slaves on the African coast that resulted in women and children typically spending longer periods trapped aboard ships than men. On the ships, captains treated enslaved men as "enemies," as Newton described it, from the moment they arrived aboard, and put them in shackles "for many months (sometimes for nine or ten), without mitigation or relief, unless they are sick."[310] Women, by contrast, remained unshackled for the duration of the voyage, but sweltered in crowded rooms below deck. Children slept alongside their captors, or on boats and platforms above the deck. In the Americas, enslaved men, women, and children had divergent experiences of their sale and seasoning. Affluent colonists quickly purchased adults of both sexes and forced marched them to their plantations, where they beat both men and women to break them to hard labor, and subjected women to sexual violence. Meanwhile, middling whites frequently took children and tried to train them to a profession or employ them as a servant in towns. The Long Middle Passage was thus a system designed to commodify physically diverse people, and then channel them to an array of slave buyers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade therefore resembled a complicated system of roads in both Africa and the Americas, linked by a bridge across the Atlantic. Slave traders both constructed these roads, and forced enslaved people to take different routes along them after the moments of sales that constituted the crossroads and junctions. In Africa, these roads led in both directions and crisscrossed each other, forming a tangle of routes that captives might spend years travelling through before they were brought to the coast if, indeed, they ever were. Even the road to the

[310] Newton, *Thoughts,* p.14.

coast did not necessarily directly lead to a slave ship, as a European might reject a person, who could travel back into the interior. Those Africans who were carried across the Atlantic entered another complicated system of paths that they might spend months navigating before they reached their final destination. The routes that groups of Africans were forced to take through this system varied considerably. Some of the paths in the African interior did funnel people who shared common languages and cultures to a single slaving port, and thence to the Americas. But others brought together culturally and linguistically diverse people and then forced them through a complex internal slave trade that further intermixed people before they arrived at the coast. The system of metaphorical roads in the Americas were equally complex. Some led directly from the slave ships to large plantations, where Africans might work with their shipmates for the remainder of their lives. But other pathways led into the convoluted American slave trade, which might subsequently scatter Africans far from their shipmates. To trace particular groups of enslaved people from Africa to the Americas, historians must thus examine the intricate system of routes that comprised the Long Middle Passage.

In this dissertation, I have offered the Long Middle Passage as a model to explain the forced migration of enslaved Africans through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. I have used a number of case studies that collectively point toward important similarities in the ways that merchants and planters throughout the Atlantic World traded enslaved Africans. It is the nature of case studies, however, that they only illuminate a small part of a much bigger picture and so further research is required to show the ways that the individual practices that comprised the Long Middle Passage changed over time and differed between locations in the Atlantic World. Researching pre-seventeenth century sources will shed light on the development of trading practices that were well established during the period of this study. I have also looked at just two

regions of the African coast, but it will require additional research to discern how the practices described here either remained consistent, or differed, in other locations. There are, for example, large collections of papers for captains trading at Angolan ports—the largest African slaving region—that can be analyzed. Spotlighting Britain's slave trade is useful, especially for scholars interested in the experiences of enslaved people who were forcibly transported to the Caribbean and North America. However, numerous European nations participated in the slave trade, and so exploring their practices promises to considerably expand the scope and significance of this project. Adopting this broader, trans-national framework will do much to fill out the findings of this dissertation and show how millions of people experienced their enslavement.

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Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

2016 Ph.D. History, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

Dissertation Title: "The Long Middle Passage: The Enslavement of Africans and the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, 1640-1807" (Advisor: Philip D. Morgan)

Fields of Specialization:
Early America and the Atlantic World; America in the Nineteenth Century; Early Modern France; Pre-Colonial African History

2012 M.A. History, Johns Hopkins University

2009 M.A. History with Distinction, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

2007 B.A. History with Honors, Victoria University of Wellington

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2016- 17 Mellon Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in the study of the Early Americas and the Atlantic World, USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute, Los Angeles, California

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles:

"Keeping "the wheel in motion": Trans-Atlantic Credit Terms, Slave Prices, and the Geography of Slavery in the British Americas, 1755-1807," *The Journal of Economic History,* September, 2015: 660-89

"Guinea Factors, Slave Sales and the Profits of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Late Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: The Case of John Tailyour," *The William and Mary Quarterly,* April 2015: 243-86

Co-Authored Book:

Stephen D. Behrendt & Nicholas Radburn, "Liverpool, the Slave Trade, and Atlantic History," under contract with Liverpool University Press

Book Reviews:

Review of *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807* by Gregory E. O'Malley, *Louisiana History* (Summer 2016)

AWARDS AND HONORS

2016	Richard L. Morton Award for distinguished article by an author in graduate study, *The William and Mary Quarterly*
2015	Yu Wu Prize for best student in Atlantic History, Johns Hopkins University
2011	Alexander Butler Prize for the best paper written by a first year doctoral student, Johns Hopkins University

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2015-16	Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2015-16	Doris G. Quinn Foundation, Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2015-16	Dean's Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University (Declined)
2010-15	Five-year fellowship for graduate study, Johns Hopkins University
2010-13	The Kagan Fellowship, Competitive three-year additional graduate fellowship, Johns Hopkins University
2007	One-year fellowship for graduate study, Victoria University of Wellington

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

2012	"New frontiers in the Liverpool slave trade: Business networks in the Bight of Biafra and Ceded Isles," The American Historical Association, Chicago
2008	"William Davenport and the British Slave and Ivory Trades at Old Calabar and Cameroon, 1756-1792," Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database Launch Conference, Emory University, Atlanta GA

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor:

The History of Capitalism, University of Southern California (Spring 2017)

Slavery and the Atlantic World, University of Southern California (Fall 2016)

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Victoria University of Wellington (Fall 2010)

Teaching Assistant:

History of Brazil, Johns Hopkins University (Fall 2015)

Pre-Colonial Africa, Johns Hopkins University (Fall 2012)

Senior Thesis, Johns Hopkins University (Fall 2011 & Spring 2012)

American History, Victoria University of Wellington (Spring 2008)

DIGITAL HUMANITIES PROJECTS

2016	Visualizing the Middle Passage. Creator
2008-2010	*Liverpool as a Trading Port* (www.liverpoolmaritime.org). Database Design, Contributor of Data
2006-2008	*Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (www.slavevoyages.org). Glossary Co-Author, Contributor of Data, Website Tester

MEDIA COVERAGE

2015	Melvin Blackman, "British financial innovation helped slavery flourish," http://qz.com/497366/paper-british-financial-innovation-helped-slavery-flourish/

LANGUAGES

English	Native
French	Reading, good
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REFERENCES

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